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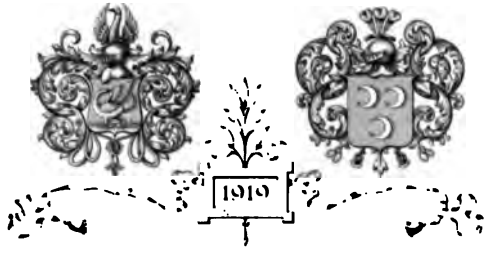

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MEMOIRS

OF

CELEBRATED WOMEN.

EDITED BY

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MEMOIRS

OF

CELEBRATED WOMEN.

FRANCES D'AUBIGNÉ, MARCHIONESS DE MAINTENON.

Frances D'Aubigne, the subject of the present Memoir, was descended from a long line of noble ancestors, who had seemed as desirous of preserving the unsullied honour of the family, as of conveying the titles by which they were distinguished, unimpeached to their posterity.

It would appear, that long before the civil wars of the League, the family of Aubigné had been eminent in France, but it is unnecessary for our present purpose, to trace the origin of Madame de Maintenon farther than her grandfather, the famous Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné, so well known as the friend and adherent of Henri Quatre, the historian of a great part of the contentions which occurred during that celebrated Monarch's reign, and in which he himself was often involved.

After passing a life, distinguished alike by the display of literary, as well as military talents, Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné died at Geneva in 1630, leaving a son, Constant, father of Frances, afterwards Marchioness de Maintenon. As his conduct and vicious propensities induced the unfortunate train of misery and wretchedness, in the midst of which our heroine was brought into existence, and received the first rudiments of her education —and from which also she was for some years one of the chief sufferers—it will be necessary, ere we proceed, to trace the distinguishing circumstances of his history, that we may be led to a proper estimate of her character and motives.

It is ever painful to record the dereliction of a son from the conduct of a noble and virtuous father; but in spite of a liberal education, salutary advice, and the best examples a well spent life could furnish, Constant d'Aubigné profited but little from the care of his parent.

Being early in life through his extravagance involved in debt, he was very solicitous of settling in Carolina, and for this purpose obtained the post of Viceroy of the American Islands; but, before leaving France, it having transpired that he had had some understanding with the English, of which the French court became cognizant, they not only immediately revoked his appointment, but deprived him also of the government of Maillezais, which he had till then enjoyed.

Thus, totally reduced in his finances, and speedily reaping the just fruits of his vices and imprudence, he must reasonably have looked forward to a period of difficulties and uncertainty; but the generosity or weakness of a Madame de Noailles, a rich widow

of the district of Aunis, interposed to avert these threatened misfortunes.

Seeing the straits to which he was reduced, she unhesitatingly offered him her hand. Yet the hazardous step, which was beyond a doubt an infringement of that fine delicacy which constitutes one of the most admired and beautiful traits in the female character, might, nevertheless, have taken its rise from a generous motive. D'Aubigné's ruin she most probably attributed to the unthinking levity of youth, and in all likelihood she gave him credit for better conduct and greater steadiness in future, after having so dearly purchased his past experience.

Every day, however, exemplifies the risk that a woman runs by confidence, grounded upon such unwarranted deductions; and the result in the present instance was of the most deplorable character.

Constant D'Aubigné was in too needy a condition to reject her proposal, but had neither feeling, principle, nor honour sufficient to estimate the motive which prompted it, or to make a proper use of his good fortune. He showed his wife neither kindness nor gratitude; but on the contrary treated her with the utmost indifference, and the most heartless neglect.

Galled by his ill treatment, and thinking by such means to reclaim him, she took every opportunity to raise his jealousy, by showing a preference for another; and thus imprudently threw a stain upon her own character, without achieving her object, by recalling her husband either to love or even a decent degree of respect.

Aubigné gave way to jealousy, and his pride being irritated, led him from indifference to undisguised

obtaining from the court his removal to the prison of Niort, that he might derive succour and assistance from his relations.

It was in that place, and under such deplorable circumstances, that she brought forth, in 1635, her daughter, who, for the varied events of her life and the eminence which she attained, has been so deservedly celebrated.

She was baptized at Niort, in the diocess of Poitiers, her godfather being Francis de la Rochefoucault; her godmother, Madame de Neuillant, who gave her the name of Frances. Madame D'Aubigné, notwithstanding the bold and imprudent step she had taken at her outset in life, proved a woman of strong sense, warm affections, and great fortitude. She employed her whole mind and every energy in labouring for her husband's vindication and acquittal; and there being nothing alleged against him but vague suspicion, supported by the influence and power of the family of his first wife, Madame D'Aubigné, by her prayers and entreaties prevailed upon them not to exert their influence. At the same time, she herself drew up a memorial, which dissipated all doubt, and established the innocence of her husband in the eyes of his judges, in consequence of which he was restored to liberty. His freedom, notwithstanding the lessons of experience he had received, was again misused; for while his wife was, with wonderful fortitude, stemming the torrent of misfortune, with scarcely any means of support for her little family, he was no sooner liberated than he associated with a party of young men of the most depraved and profligate characters.

They were accused of counterfeiting the coin,

and he being found amongst them, was thrown into prison along with the rest.

This confinement appears also to have been in the Chateau Trompette, for it was there that Madame de Maintenon was, for a considerable time, living with her parents, and she was often heard to say, she well recollected romping with the daughter of the jailer.

Madame D'Aubigné, finding that the prosecution against her husband was not pressed forward, began again to entertain hope. She therefore earnestly implored the assistance of his relations to procure his release, but his misconduct had so much disgusted them, that instead of assisting they only upbraided and reproached him.

His wife, however, was not discouraged. To sooth him, and alleviate his grief, she once more took up her abode with him in a prison. Their sufferings here were extreme, from poverty and the many miseries produced by anxiety and confinement; for although the former prosecution had been withdrawn by his first wife's relations, and his innocence admitted, so as to entitle him to his liberty, he seems to have been entirely stripped of all his property, and to have had no resource in this last embarrassment, except perhaps the support of a scanty pittance, unwillingly wrung from his friends by the assiduous entreaties of his wife.

Pressed by want and reduced to the very brink the grave, this miserable family was at length visited by Madame de Villette, a sister of D'Aubigné's, and though she viewed his conduct with the same disapprobation as the rest of his relatives, yet her feeling heart led her to pity their sufferings, and

her Christian principles to relieve their necessities. The spectacle which presented itself, upon her entrance into the cell, where they were shut up, would have softened the hardest heart. There lay her brother upon the stone floor under a small grated window, with despair and hunger visibly depicted in his emaciated frame and haggard countenance. His two children were wan, and scarcely covered with their rags, while the unhappy Madame D'Aubigné, without hope, and destitute of the means to procure a nurse, was endeavouring to keep them alive, though want of sustenance and mental anxieties had exhausted that nourishment which nature usually provides in a mother. On beholding it, Madame de Villette was deeply affected; she at once gave them effectual assistance, and taking the two children, carried them to Marcé, where feeling particular sympathy for the infant Frances, she gave her in charge to the same nurse who attended her own daughter, afterwards known as Madame de St. Hermine.

This providential succour again opened the heart of the unfortunate Madame D'Aubigné to hope, and recalled her wonted courage and perseverance, and esteeming all personal inconvenience, fatigue, and exertion as trifling, that was likely to relieve her husband and children, she undertook a journey to Paris, to solicit his release; but it was in vain that she supplicated the Cardinal de Richelieu, who had been an ancient enemy of the father of her husband. He was inflexible to her prayers, her tears moved him not: he unfeelingly told her, that he conceived the greatest service he could do her would be to deprive her of that husband whose release she solicited. She then made many efforts among the great of the

court, to procure even temporary assistance; but, in most instances, the poverty of her circumstances, combined with her great personal beauty, called upon her insult rather than compassion, and importunity instead of relief. In one person only, and that one a foreigner and a stranger, did her history, her misfortunes, and her virtues excite a generous interest. This was the famous and noble-hearted Duke Bernard, of Weymar, who, deploring their wretchedness, and commiserating the situation of the family, sent her a present of a hundred pistoles, with which sum, though disappointed of her greater hopes, she returned to D'Aubigné.

Having now a small fund sufficient for their present wants, she became anxious for the company of her children, but Madame de Villette, who had by this time grown fond of her little Frances, parted from her with much reluctance.

Some time after this Madame D'Aubigné, who had lived in the constant dread of the trial of her husband being carried on to a fatal conclusion, began to feel her hopes revive by the slowness of the proceedings, resolved to make another attempt for his discharge. By her pressing solicitations a pardon was at length granted, upon condition that he should become a Catholic. This, far from being an obstacle in her mind, was most likely considered by her as a happy circumstance, having been educated in that belief herself; and D'Aubigné, who was not so much devoted to the Protestant faith as to let it impede his enlargement, promised whatever they required, and was once more set free.

He soon forgot his promises, however, and resolved again to seek in America that tranquillity he

had not found in his native country, attributing his unhappiness to any thing rather than its real cause —his own bad conduct and restless disposition. He accordingly embarked with his family and wife, who doubtless felt thankful for his freedom, and the distance which would intervene between him and the companions that had cost him so much, though once more thrown upon the world to struggle unarmed with adversity.

Miserable as was this early period of her life, and few have experienced a fate so rigorous as to be born in a prison and almost to perish through famine, yet to these misfortunes and the hard education she received, may be ascribed many of the good qualities of Madame de Maintenon. Indeed, she often recalled circumstances which took place at the Chateau Trompette with satisfaction, and no doubt can be entertained that the misfortunes to which she was so soon exposed, and so perfectly enured, greatly tended to give her that strength of mind and firmness of character, which equally resisted through life the humiliations of adversity and the allurements of prosperity.

Many anecdotes are told of this part of Madame de Maintenon's life, which, if true, would prove that her mother strove to keep before her children's eyes the noble race from which they sprung, in order to stimulate to deeds of virtue and counteract a bad example.

One day the little Frances was playing with the daughter of the keeper of the prison, a child about her own age, who had a baby-house furnished with silver dishes. Priding herself upon this superiority, she meanly reproached her less fortunate compa-

nion with her poverty; "'Tis true I am poor," said Frances, "but I am a lady and you are not."

At another time, Madame D'Aubigné, was recounting the exploits of Agrippa D'Aubigné, her grandfather, and the favour in which he was with Henry the Great. "And *I*," said the child, with a serious earnestness, "shall I never be any thing?" "What would *you* wish to be?" asked her mother, "the Queen of Navarre," replied she.

The miseries of this wretched family, however, were not confined to the soil of France, wherever they went misfortune seemed to pursue them. The sin of disobedience to a parent, brought protracted retribution on the head of Madame D'Aubigné in the course of succeeding events.

After their embarkation, every thing seemed favourable, and gave promise of a pleasant and safe passage, but before long the little girl, Frances, was seized with a severe illness, which reduced her to the last extremity, and she lay for some time without signs of life. Her mother with tears and groans took her in her arms and endeavoured to re-animate her in her bosom. D'Aubigné, tired with his wife's lamentations, wanted to snatch the child (which he supposed to be dead) from her, asserting that the sight only served the more to distract her, and a sailor stood ready to cast the body into the ocean. A moment more, and she who was destined to rule the councils of a great monarch, and in some degree affect the fate of all Europe, would have been given over to destruction; but her mother implored one last embrace, and placing her hand on the heart of the little Frances, declared her child was still alive! Every method was then

tried to restore her, and she gradually recovered. It is said, that many years after, Madame de Maintenon relating this circumstance once at Marly, the Bishop of Metz, who was present, replied, "It is not for trifles, Madame, that people are permitted to return so far."

She only escaped this danger to fall into another. Scarcely was she recovered from the illness, when the ship was attacked by a Turkish vessel, which however was beat off, and they pursued their voyage in safety.

Voltaire mentions that on landing in America, Frances D'Aubigné was nearly destroyed by a serpent; and it is said by another author, that being left on the sea-shore, by the carelessness of a servant, her mother running to seek her, found her surrounded by huge serpents, ready to destroy her. The idea of self-preservation could not enter the bosom of a parent at such a time, and advancing undauntedly, she snatched her child from amongst them. These stories may be true, or may be false, but it is to be remembered that such early perils have been either discovered or invented by biographers, to give interest and dignity to the youthful years of almost all persons who afterwards became great.

Madame D'Aubigné being now fixed in America, gave her whole attention to the education of her children.

Happily for them, she was too poor not to bring them up herself, and thus being intimately acquainted with every turn of their dispositions, and knowing equally well their merits and deficiencies, was able sedulously to cultivate the first, and to

correct the latter. It has been said, that she bestowed most pains upon her daughter, because her talents were greater than her brother's, and because she resembled herself in character; but no part of Madame D'Aubigné's conduct authorizes a suspicion of her adopting so unjust and selfish a line of conduct. A person of her sense would perceive that it was upon a female that the hardships of their situation were likely to press most heavily, and in looking forward with maternal anxiety for her child, she did not fail to appreciate justly the difficulties and dangers to which a poor and unprotected young woman would be exposed. She could in no way supply the want of fortune or friends, and the character of her husband forbade all dependance upon his exertions to retrieve their affairs. She wisely, therefore, turned her thoughts to cultivating and fortifying the mind of Frances for the struggles which awaited her. No opportunity was lost by her to enforce, from the first dawn of reason, strength and presence of mind, and her own example afforded the best lesson of virtue,—she sustained every reverse of fortune with courage, and the vices of her husband she viewed with lenity.

Madame D'Aubigné regulated the literary education of her daughter with great care also, making her read the lives of Plutarch, and such other works as inspire a love of virtue, and tend to form the judgment.

In order to conquer her extreme timidity, and to teach her to reflect, she likewise caused her to give an account of what she had read, compose little

essays on different subjects, and write to her relations.

The little Frances, who thus acquired a habit of writing with a great deal of ease and freedom, frequently composed letters for her brother also, as he was of an indolent temper, which unfortunately adhered to him through life; and being trained in this manner, she learned to exercise her reason upon every subject that occurred, and often attempted those beyond her dawning powers.

The time thus passed in America was the happiest they had yet known together, and its tranquil retirement contrasted strongly with the miseries and privations to which they had so long been subjected in their native land; but this was not destined to continue, and in 1647 the calm was abruptly broken by the death of Monsieur D'Aubigné.

He had reckoned upon growing rich by trade, and subsisted till his scheme should be realized upon the scanty produce of a small military employment, which he had obtained with great difficulty. So that his death threw this unfortunate family into utter destitution. His widow immediately returned into France; but there his debts were still unpaid, and she applied to some one with whom they had a connexion, to give Frances a temporary asylum. It is even said that she in the first place offered her as a hostage or surety to the principal creditor, but his wife refused to give refuge to one she denominated "a beggarly brat." The judge of the place, however, took her through charity into his house; but seeing that her mother still hovered about her, he sent off poor Frances by the first vessel to her aunt, Madame de Montalembert, who was extreme-

ly provoked on the arrival of such a gift. Madame de Villette, who stood in the same relation to Mademoiselle D'Aubigné, and had once, as we have seen, both rescued the family from the worst horrors of a prison, and had caused Frances to be nursed with her own daughter, again felt sincere pity for so many unmerited misfortunes, and requested to have her forlorn rejected niece. Her mother, though a zealous Catholic, had not fortitude sufficient to resist entreaties which assured so happy and respectable a home for her daughter, although Madame de Villette made a point of instructing her in the Calvinistic faith.

Mademoiselle D'Aubigné took a great interest in this religion, which acquired no small lustre from the life of her aunt Villette, to whom she became most affectionately attached.

Incapable of mediocrity, she loved Calvinism with enthusiasm, and though in the course of time, by the unwearied endeavours of friends, and the diligence of Divines, who in the Catholic church show a most exemplary eagerness to propagate what they esteemed to be the truth, she was persuaded to return to the church of Rome, nevertheless was she at no time a bigot to the precise tenets of the religion she assumed. So far from it, on the contrary, that when she had attained the height of favour at court, and had been able to provide for her brother, she reprobated his behaviour to the Huguenots, and desired him to be merciful to men who were attached to errors in which they themselves had been involved. She then went on to state, that Henry the Fourth possessed the same creed, that man must be drawn by the cords of lenity and charity, according to the

example Christ has set us, and that conversion was not his province; adding, in conclusion, "Sanctify your own soul, and be severe to yourself only."

Whilst she remained with Madame Villette, however, the young mind of Frances was deeply impressed with all that her aunt taught her, and she resisted every effort which was made to effect a change in her ideas. Her mother, on one occasion, wished to take her to mass, but she firmly refused to accompany her. "You do not love me then?" said her mother. "I love my God better," replied the child. She was nevertheless obliged to go, but showed so much contempt for the mysteries they pretended to celebrate, that the patience of her mother being exhausted, she gave her a blow on the cheek. "Strike," said she, turning the other towards her, "it is glorious to suffer for my religion." Such examples serve at least to show the extent of the impressions her aunt had effected on religious subjects; nor did this good woman fail to inspire her with an equal love for the moral virtues, about which no difference of opinion would exist, the principles being implanted by nature in all hearts. It was from her that she imbibed that feeling regard for the poor and unfortunate, which she so eminently displayed, and that eagerness to administer personally to their wants. Through life she adhered, in this respect, to her aunt's example; and not being satisfied with giving to the unhappy pecuniary assistance alone, she visited them, inquired kindly and often minutely into their circumstances and misfortunes, cheered and edified them by her conversation, and soothed their grief with her healing sympathy.

Whilst at Marcé, Mademoiselle D'Aubigné was

always employed by her aunt to distribute her alms, in order to habituate her to the pleasure of giving assistance and of taking an interest in the poor; but this life, so congenial to the temper and inclinations of Frances, was not of long duration. Her mother anxiously feared that her daughter was about to be lost to the Church of Rome, which she felt firmly persuaded was the only true one; for though at first she imagined that to efface the impressions she might receive, would be an easy task, yet they now began to assume so fixed a character, and appeared so deeply engraven on her mind that her parent became seriously alarmed. She would fain have taken her daughter out of Madame de Villette's hands, but that lady could not be induced to part with her; she therefore put her mother off with excuses as long as they availed, and when at length pressed for a decisive answer, she met the demand with a flat refusal. The rest of the family likewise viewed this education with a jealous eye, and although they had shown no inclination to assist the mother or shelter the daughter in their hour of need, yet could little bear the idea of a relative being brought up in the Protestant faith. Madame de Neuillant, mother of the Duchess of Navailles and a relation of Madame D'Aubigné's, in consequence solicited and obtained an order of the court, charging her with the education of Frances.

Madame de Neuillant having thus succeeded in getting the young lady under her control, forgot nothing which might induce her to adopt the Catholic religion. But the result of her lessons served only to display the firmness and opening talents of her niece.

Upon one occasion, when the clergyman argued against her tenets, though unconvinced, his reasoning silenced her for a time; at last she said, "*You* know more of this subject than I do; but here is a book," showing him the Bible, "which knows a thousand times more than *you*: this book does *not* say what you *do*, and that is the reason you are averse to its being read."

Madame de Neuillant, piqued at so long a resistance, began to think that perhaps she had taken a wrong method, and resolved upon trying what humiliation would effect; reasoning was therefore no longer resorted to; caresses were suppressed, and harshness succeeded to blandishment. They pretended to consider her as on a level with the servants, and she was employed in the most menial offices.

Sometimes she assisted the coachman to dress the horses. Sometimes she had the honour to comb the coarse greasy locks of a peasant girl, who had before attended upon herself; and this was permitted as so great a favour, that she cried upon being deprived of the privilege.

Every morning at break of day, with a mask upon her face (then used in France to keep off the scorching heat of the sun,) a common straw hat upon her head, a basket in one hand, and a switch in the other, poor Frances might be seen going forth to keep the turkeys; with strict orders not to touch her breakfast, which was in the basket, till she had learnt by heart a given number of verses. She was often heard to say in after years, "I commanded in the poultry-yard; that was the first government conferred upon me." Thus persecuted and unprotected

was this poor girl suffered to wander about, and being very lovely, it is not wonderful that she attracted the notice of those who thought themselves her equals. But every thought of what was due to her was abandoned by her bigoted relations, in hopes of securing the success of their zealous endeavours for her conversion to Catholicism.

It was during this period of her life that a young peasant, who had fixed his affections upon her, afforded her an opportunity which she did not neglect, of writing to her aunt Villette, detailing the system of persecution she was suffering under. The answer she received confirmed her in all her principles.

The young man, however, having made her a declaration of his passion, and she feeling herself not at all suited to the mean station to which she had been reduced, ingenuously mentioned the circumstance to Madame de Neuillant, who was startled, though nothing could be more natural than the occurrence. She began to fear that her relative might some day add frailty to candour, and she therefore placed her in the convent of the Ursulines at Niort, Madame de Villette consenting to pay her pension; for although Madame de Neuillant wished extremely to have the renown of her conversion, she by no means wished to incur any expenses attending it.

Upon her arrival at the convent, every art was put in practice, to accomplish her change of faith; they tormented her with instructions and catechisms, and exerted every pious artifice (if artifice can ever be pious) to win her. Notwithstanding so many efforts, with a constancy which could little have been expected, she laughed at and rejected

them all. "I must be a Catholic *now*," said she, "for they have promised me—an image."

Young as she was, she still persevered; and to confirm the granddaughter of Agrippa D'Aubigné, that stanch supporter of Protestantism in her Calvinistic principles, seemed to the reformed church at Niort a paramount duty. Having found means of communicating with her, they animated her to a courageous resistance, they desired her to call to mind how unalterably her ancestors had clung to their religion, and that Agrippa had lived and died in it, though the servant and enthusiastic friend of the Great Henry. In their billets, which were sent to her secretly, they also conjured her not to throw a slur upon the memory of her grandfather, and to peruse the books which they sent with attention.

Thus time passed on, without much impression being made in the principles of the young Frances, till one nun, more sensible or more skilful than her companions, plainly perceived that such a mind as Mademoiselle D'Aubigné's was not to be wrought upon by the means then used to effect this much-desired object, and she brought before her all the arguments she could collect in favour of the Catholic religion. By insinuation rather than opposition, she gradually vanquished her aversion: first, by degrees she gained her attention to its doctrine; and then meeting the objections of Frances by a peculiarly persuasive style of specious reasoning, she succeeded step by step, and little by little, till at length she prevailed upon her to go to mass. This point attained, constraint was afterwards laid aside.

The nuns were now enthusiastic in their desire to complete her conversion, more especially as the

descendant of a man so famous in the history of France. They also looked forward to the great eclat their convent would receive by the recall of such an obstinate heretic to the church, being attributed of course to their own talents; for, perhaps, in no race of beings is there more jealousy of prerogative or more vanity of superior excellence displayed, than in those societies called holy, which would persuade that they have shaken off, as beneath and unworthy of a thought, the pomps and follies of the world.

One article, however, of the Roman Catholic faith Frances D'Aubigné could never be brought to believe. It was that which excludes from eternal life all who are not of the church of Rome.

"I will admit all," said she, "provided you will not ask me to believe that my aunt Villette will be damned." A happy presage of the goodness and gratitude of her heart! No argument could induce her to give up this idea, and it was found absolutely necessary, when she entered into what her instructers called "the true religion," to permit her to reserve some places in Heaven for such of her relations and friends as adhered to what they termed "the false."

So cruel and narrow-minded is the property of exclusive zeal in every religion, that even Madame de Villette, who had hitherto borne the expense of her niece, would no longer pay her pension, upon hearing of her conversion. The sentiments of nature and kindness which had formerly influenced her, seemed by that deed to be stifled in her bosom. Nor was the same ungenerous feeling wanting on the part of her converters; for although the nuns of

Niort kept her some time out of charity, their pity at length grew cold; now that they were no longer stimulated by ostentation, benevolence drooped and died. They would, they said, have given their very heart's blood to convert her, and yet they would not now spare her even the common necessaries of life. Neither did they show any delicacy in their refusal; for before the poor girl, they represented to Madame D'Aubigné that their house could not maintain boarders who could not pay, and begged her to take away her daughter, who was big enough to appear in the world. With the most painful feelings the blushing Frances listened to their declaration: indeed, it was so impressed upon her memory, that she ever ardently desired to acquit herself of the debt due to these nuns. When she was introduced at Court it was her first care, for till then she had not been mistress of funds sufficient to pay that trifle. But she afterwards taught them by her favours, not to despise or insult that poverty in others which they pretended to value in themselves.

In recounting this fact at St. Cyr:—"My children," added she, "let us always do good; it is rarely lost with men, but never with God."

After Frances left Niort, Madame D'Aubigné supported herself by her needle at Paris, being drawn thither by some law-suits which she had instituted for the recovery of part of her husband's property. One in particular was of great importance, praying the restoration of the barony of Surineaux, an estate which had belonged to Constant D'Aubigné, and it had been well had he been wise enough to have kept it. She, however, lacked the power and interest then necessary in France for the success of such a

suit. Others were for considerable sums, which the Court of France owed to Theodore Agrippa, who had sunk his fortune in the service of his master at a time when none but rebels filled their pockets.

These were her last hopes, but the poor unprotected widow found every ear shut to her petitions; yet she had used every exertion to engage those in her interest who had influence. Among others, Madame de Neuillant introduced her to Scarron, who lived in the same neighbourhood as herself, and whom she sometimes visited. Madame D'Aubigné's case requiring powerful friends, there was no house where she was so likely to meet with people of the first rank, as such of both sexes frequented it constantly.

Upon one occasion Mademoiselle D'Aubigné accompanied her mother, who wished to bring her into society, and if possible to cure her in some degree of the bashfulness which was natural to a female of her years. Their circumstances were too narrow to admit of a choice of dress, and poor Frances' gown being too short, made her so timid upon her introduction, and she blushed to such a painful degree, that feeling the alteration in her countenance, she could not refrain from bursting into tears. Scarron pitying the poor girl's confusion, cheered her up with some of his merry sallies. This visit, as we shall see hereafter, led the way to a very serious engagement.

Having returned to Niort, Madame D'Aubigné began to feel the full force and effect of "hope overthrown;" her ardent desire to regain the lost property for the sake of her children had carried her through the exertions necessary for such an un-

dertaking; but now the airy fabric raised by her imagination had disappeared, and the melancholy abode of poverty alone remained as the future asylum of herself and children.

This cheerless gloom, and its dreary anticipations of the future, were too much for her overloaded heart, and she sank under the struggle that had so long existed in her bosom, leaving behind her two destitute orphans. Her daughter shut herself up in a little room at Niort for three months, giving vent to the bitter grief with which she was overpowered by the loss of so good a mother; and which was in no slight degree aggravated by the thought that her life was the sacrifice of maternal anxiety, to the deep sorrows and hopeless ruin in which they were inextricably involved.

After this lamentable misfortune, Madame de Neuillant placed her brother as a page in a great family, and granted her cold protection to Frances, without which she would indeed have been most pitiably circumstanced. But she did not—perhaps could not—appreciate her character, and in consequence no sympathy ever existed between them. Notwithstanding the extreme timidity of Mademoiselle D'Aubigné, it was evident that she was quite unconscious of her beauty, and always absorbed in thoughts of the misfortunes which had commenced in her cradle, and seemed but to multiply with her increasing years. Although this reflective propensity so constantly exhibited itself, yet so far was Madame de Neuillant from encouraging a more cheerful tone, and soothing her heavy afflictions, that she often tauntingly told her, that her mirror mocked her, and strove constantly, perhaps for the

pleasure of exercising her authority, to depress her. This conduct so effectually overcame her spirits, that, if by any chance she was seated opposite the window, where the light fell strongly upon her, she would burst into tears, and would willingly have escaped such animadversion, by exchanging faces with the first person she might meet in the street, so wearisome were these unfeeling jibes upon her personal appearance.

Happily for Mademoiselle D'Aubigné, however, she had been introduced by Mademoiselle de Neuillant to a young lady at Paris, of the name of St. Hermant, who not only felt a sincere friendship for her, but expressed it with all the enthusiasm of true affection; she wept with her over her sorrows, and spoke through the sympathy of her own warm feelings to the heart of her companion. This fortunate acquaintance proved a fruitful source of pleasure to our young heroine. From her affection she drew the healing balm of consolation, which none else seemed willing or capable of affording; and who is there that has not felt, in the hour of affliction, more solace from the untutored but affectionate expression of kindly feeling even of a menial, than in the most laboured attention of a cold-blooded, soulless, relative. To this friend, then, Frances often wrote freely, pouring forth the copious and generous tide of her feelings. In one letter she begs her to thank the young lady who introduced them to each other, for giving her a friend who might afford some consolation in the loss of a mother, if any thing in this world were capable of so doing.

The style of this letter is very pleasing, and in it she pays a compliment to Scarron, whose well

timed kindness she had not forgotten. Mademoiselle de St. Hermant showed it to him. "What!" cried the poet, "here is a girl as careful to conceal her wit as the rest of her sex are forward to display it; is it at Martinico she has learnt to write thus elegantly?" He wrote her a very polite and complimentary epistle, expressive of his surprise, and desiring a farther acquaintance; this gradually drew her into a correspondence, the consequences of which neither of them, in all probability, could then foresee.

Mademoiselle D'Aubigné now returned to Paris with Madame de Neuillant, who placed her in the monastery of the Ursulines in the Rue St. Jacques, but frequently invited her to her house, and gave permission to the Chevalier St. Meré, a sort of courtly philosopher, and then much in fashion, to instruct her relative in the manners of the day, and give her what was called "Le bon air." Under his instructions she in some degree conquered her timidity, and was introduced into mixed society, going frequently with her patroness to Monsieur Scarron's.

This poet, who, with all his peculiarities, had a kind and sensitive heart, was touched with the charms of the young lady as much as by her misfortunes, and being a man of discernment, he soon became delighted with the high qualities of her mind, admired her wit, and even respected her modesty. The great change which took place in Scarron soon discovered how passionately he had become attached; he grew melancholy,—for how could he, equally deranged in fortune and health, confess that he aspired to one in every respect so

lovely? Besides, he conceived his person and infirmities were such as must necessarily make him disagreeable in the eyes of a young person of such singular beauty and merit. He consequently appeared daily more and more respectful and submissive, but durst not venture to make overtures which he feared would render him ridiculous.

His poetical vein, however, soothed him in some degree for his constrained silence by giving a vent to his feelings; he celebrated his mistress under the name of Sylvia and Cloris, in so serious a strain as sufficiently to discover how devotedly he loved her.

Whilst matters remained in this state, he was informed that she suffered very much from her relative, who, by unmerited harshness, imbittered all her benefactions.

Madame de Neuillant was a woman without any generosity of sentiment, avaricious, and of an overbearing disposition, which generally vented itself upon her dependant niece; notwithstanding this, in society she was proud of her beauty and merits, well aware that with the world she gained much eclat for her presumed kindness and well-known protection. Frances uttered no complaint, but bore her ill-usage in patient silence. Her gratitude and prudence equally forbade her to murmur at one from whom she had received so many benefits.

In spite of so many faults, Madame de Neuillant had the welfare of her protegé at heart, though her temper too often soured her best impulses. She now begun to decline visiting so frequently at Scarron's, and appeared rarely at his parties, fear-

ing the seductive examples of many whom they met there. She was apprehensive that the youth and inexperience of Frances might induce her to prefer a life of idleness and luxurious ennui with such gay votaries, to the more arduous course and active scenes of honest industry, and that the assumed air of grandeur which was there commonly affected by the courtier guests, might disgust her with a station of independent mediocrity.

Scarron in the mean while reflected much upon the unhappy situation of Mademoiselle D'Aubigné, and the more he reflected, the more his hopes of being accepted increased. The connexion, in point of family, was no disparagement to her; he was of an ancient stock which had made a great figure in the law, and were nearly related to many eminent and illustrious houses of his own time. Under these circumstances therefore he considered that by such an engagement, if he regained his health, he should have the wife he loved; and if that blessing were denied him, he should gain an inestimable companion during his hours of sickness.

In short—he was in love. But his passion was now more than ever increased by the esteem which he felt on reflecting that this poor girl had never by look or complaint suffered her unhappiness to escape her. Every thing conspired to fix his determination, and finding himself one day alone with her, he began by lamenting the rigour of her destiny, and very emphatically expressing his opinion of her hard fate, to owe every thing to an avaricious woman, who seasoned with reproaches all the good offices she performed; and who, though evidently feeling it an honour to appear with her in public, in

private treated her with all the contumely of an inferior domestic. Mademoiselle D'Aubigné answered only by tears.

"If you should lose Madame de Neuillant," said he, "what will become of you then?" Her tears flowed more copiously as this reflection brought to her mind a series of long passed events the recurrence of which she fancied she had but too much reason to dread.

"You will in such case," said Scarron, "be delivered up to the most frightful indigence, or reduced to a servile condition, worse than indigence itself; or else exposed to the many snares of seduction, possibly ending in all the contempt of libertinism. You! formed for the most brilliant, the most elevated station. You! the descendant of a man of such splendid talents, and celebrated for the favour which he enjoyed under the first of monarchs! Had you cause to blush for your misfortunes, I should be the last to repeat them. But I cannot conceal that your only support is Madame de Neuillant; should you be deprived of her, should she die, what will become of you?"

With her lovely eyes turned to Heaven, she meekly replied, "What a good God shall see fit!"

"That is all well," said the Abbé, "but when the highest nobles in the land offer you a handsome establishment, will you recollect that an honest indigence is much better than such riches?"

"In the present case, what do you think I ought to do?" interrupted Mademoiselle D'Aubigné.

"A young lady," replied Scarron, "placed in such a situation as you are, has no refuge but a convent or marriage; these two asylums alone can

save you from the perils to which your beauty, which is already celebrated, will expose you. Should you wish to take the veil I will pay your dowry. If you are determined to marry, I can only offer you a very limited fortune and an ugly person. Whichever choice you adopt, though it be that which will not make me happy, yet I will cherish the recollection of having delivered you from the harshness of your protectress; the temptations of the opulent, and the artifices and intrigues of the courtiers. But before you make your determination, I pray you to consider how great must have been my esteem for you, before I could have dreamt of turning my thoughts to matrimony; for previous to this, I was of all men living the most unlikely to enter into the marriage state."

Mademoiselle D'Aubigné was deeply touched with the kind feelings he expressed, and still more with his disinterested conduct, in giving her the option of retiring from the world. In reply, she told him that she would freely accept his proposal, since it would enable her to show him her gratitude, provided Madame de Neuillant would consent to it. The same evening, Scarron solicited that lady's approval, who readily granted his request to rid herself of the burden. Her only objection was to her age, and it was therefore agreed to delay the nuptials for two years, but this term he afterwards succeeded in shortening: in about twelve months after the contract had been made they were united.

In the eye of the world this marriage was variously construed, but all agreed in considering it a most unccountable affair, and every one appeared astonished that a beautiful girl of fifteen should vo-

luntarily sacrifice herself to a cripple, who had not even the recommendation of wealth to counterbalance his infirmities. But what a libel was this upon the female character! and how well answered in the behaviour of Madame Scarron! Are other examples wanting, or does not daily experience show that women can fully appreciate merit and reward it, though without the adventitious advantages of fortune or a fair exterior? Let it be granted, that with the mass these considerations are very generally preponderant; but there are still too many brilliant exceptions to allow so unworthy an imputation to affect the whole sex, and they widely erred who judged Frances Scarron's conduct by such narrow motives. She had learned to appreciate and practise far more generous principles. Sympathy and love on the one side, with gratitude and esteem on the other, were the ties of affection between the parties in the present instance, and the estimable devotion of Madame Scarron, from her union with the Abbé till their final separation, calls alike for our praise and most unqualified admiration.

Although conducting himself to her with undeviating tenderness and affection, she had yet many discomforts to abide, from his confirmed habits and the company which surrounded him; but these will be best inferred from a sketch of his history.

Paul Scarron was the eldest son of a counsellor in the parliament, and descended from an ancient family of the same name, resident in Paris. Having fallen into a kind of paralysis, he was for many years deprived of the free use of his limbs, and to beguile his cares and exercise his wit, of which he had naturally a great store, he addicted himself to

the kind of writing which is called the burlesque, in which he soon excelled both in prose and verse.

He was small of stature, but handsome and well made; and it is perhaps impossible to depict better the character of his genius and his person, than by the distich which he himself composed and placed at the head of one of his works:

> Ille ego sum vates rabido data præda dolore
> Qui supero sanos lusibus atque joçis.

His uncle was Bishop of Grenoble, and he saw himself heir to an annual revenue of twenty thousand livres; till, by the death of his mother, his prospects were entirely altered. His father having married a second wife, Frances de Plaix, had by her three children, and being a man of extreme good nature, and destitute of all firmness of character, his wife took advantage of his weaknesses to persecute his son by the first marriage and to squander and appropriate his estate in a most unjustifiable and improper manner.

Paul Scarron, thus hated by his dishonest stepmother, and sacrificed by his father, who through the imbecility of his disposition, relinquished the sacred duties of a parent to preserve peace at home, was forced to enter the church, where by putting on the band, he could enjoy the income without practising either the fatigues or the virtues of the profession; but he never persevered so far as to take holy orders. Being of a lively turn of mind, full of fire and vivacity, with an inexhaustible fund of pleasantry in conversation, his company was always welcome; and from the generous reception he every where experienced, while deprived of the comforts

of a home, and of a parent to advise or control him, he naturally frequented the society most congenial to his young ideas of pleasure, and became early devoted to all the gaieties of the French metropolis.

For its convenience, therefore, he lodged in the Marais, a quarter peopled by families who lived at ease, and whose lives glided away in the amusements of ingenious idleness. Here a witty abbé of respectable family could never fail to prove an acceptable guest. But he forgot, that without moderation pleasure itself cannot long be enjoyed. Thus heedless of its consequences, Scarron lived rapidly, and at the age of twenty-five frequent long and painful disorders warned him of the decay of his constitution; but the intimation only called forth against his own infirmities an original and burlesque humour, which few men of genius could have equalled even in their gayest moments and upon an indifferent subject.

In the assemblies and parties in which he passed his time the chief aim was pleasure; it is not surprising, therefore, that amusement should have been so sedulously cultivated by him. These votaries brought each according to their talents, a portion of sparkling mirth and gay good humour to accord with the turn of mind prevalent at their meetings; and as many ladies of the court, noted for their parts and beauty, held these assemblies, they were considered as the fashionable school for forming the manners of the other sex.

To suppose that Scarron could ever attain a solidity of character, or cure himself of his levity while he remained in this society would be absurd; and of

course it rendered him altogether unfit for his profession. Nature and art, thus strongly combined, habituated him to view every thing through the lens of pleasure or vivacious folly, and even his own acute sufferings were unable to lead him into a more suitable train of thought. He was nevertheless a man of probity, and one who revered virtue, as many of his acts, particularly in his last moments, testify, but he either could not, or obstinately would not bend his mind to serious subjects.

He treated his own misfortunes as lightly as those of the most indifferent character, and avows, in a letter to Marigni, that though only twenty-seven he had lost his comely shape; that high living, and the turning of night into day had ruined those legs that danced so well, and those hands that had used the pencil and touched the lute with no ordinary skill. In short, that his irregular life had destroyed an excellent constitution, and brought on disorders that baffled the skill of the most experienced physicians. Sometimes he suffered from gout, at another time of rheumatism or some other disorder of the kind singly. Afterwards they would all attack him at once, so as to render him a perfect epitome of human misery. When he could no longer seek the company where sprightly conversation, in which he had so often borne a distinguished part, might for a while have made him insensible to his pains, he made himself a partial amends by committing his thoughts to paper. The mind even then would not bend to the infirmities of the body, and his ideas, though simple and ingenious, were mostly ludicrous but full of wit.

In this manner he fell into that style which so

many authors have endeavoured to imitate, but none have been able to approach. In his domestic affairs he was a man who, instead of exerting his mind to get the better of adverse circumstances, allowed himself to be carried down the stream without one effort of resistance. Indolence had made him an ecclesiastic, ennui made him an author—an original author. Stoics at the moment of suffering said *great* things, Scarron alone *witty* and *lively* ones. He seemed as if he was only tickled with that which gave exquisite pain to others.

Anne of Austria, mother to Louis the Fourteenth, and Regent during the minority of that monarch, held at her court a number of beautiful and accomplished young ladies, who, with many of the wits and writers of the day, had brought poetry once more into fashion at court. These attendants of the Queen, (who herself loved and encouraged letters) were commonly celebrated as classic divinities by the poets whom they patronised; and with one of these Scarron, when he lived in the Marais, had become acquainted. Through her he soon knew them all; and was especially protected by Mademoiselle Hauteford, who spoke of him to the Queen, and so much to his advantage, that her Majesty had the curiosity to see him.

Although the loss of health is a great affliction, and still more severely felt when lost by imprudence, yet this was not the only severe misfortune under which Scarron had to labour; he was destined to bear also the consequences of the errors of his father, who had joined some members of parliament to traverse the projects of Richelieu, and had

pleaded vigorously against an edict which the court pressed the parliament to register. Richelieu was not a man who could be offended with impunity; he therefore banished old Scarron to Touraine, where he died shortly after. A considerable inheritance ought now to have fallen to his son, but it was involved in a law-suit, and Scarron, with his usual levity, pleaded his cause so as rather to make the judges laugh than convince them of the justice of his demands.

He had petitioned the Cardinal de Richelieu, after having given him time to cool, through his friends at court, and had a fair prospect of success, but here his ill fortune again showed itself, and the death of the Cardinal once more blasted his hopes.

His friend Mademoiselle de Hauteford prevailed again on the Queen Regent to see him, and with his usual drollery he begged that an office might be created for him under the denomination of her Majesty's patient. The queen smiled and granted him that post. This he endeavoured to turn to good account, by praising and flattering her minister Mazarin, who granted him a pension of five hundred crowns, for which the Abbé requited him but ill. Having composed a work called Typhon, he dedicated it to Mazarin, and presented him with a copy most magnificently ornamented, which seems, however, to have been disdainfully received. Scarron was piqued at this, (perhaps the more so that his flattery was purely mercenary,) and withdrawing a sonnet in exaggerated praise of the minister, which he had inserted, he substituted a satirical one upon the same subject; but the circum-

stance most galling to the Cardinal was, that they were both true. Mazarin thereupon took an unworthy revenge, by suppressing the pension of the author.

After this he attached himself to the Prince de Condé, whose victories he celebrated, and to de Retz, to whom he dedicated the first part of his Comic Romance.

His house was now frequented by persons of the greatest distinction, and the Cardinal (de Retz) often came thither to converse with him on various subjects, in order to sharpen his wit. There also the factious were assembled, and thither the wits resorted as to an academy. The company was always well chosen, and Scarron made use of his friends by keeping two objects ever in view in his dedications: protectors for the future and funds for the present time, endeavouring thus to support his house on the footing he had put it.

Scarron may be said to have been in his proper element at these assemblies: he gave a loose to his natural volubility, and mostly delighted in satirizing the Cardinal prime minister, whom he hated. Here freedom of spirit was encouraged, and the burlesque came in fashion. Humorous and brilliant discourse flowed spontaneously, and poetical quips and pasquinades were thrown from every hand at Mazarin. His excellency, however, possesssed a characteristic which he much needed at this time, and was in this one point superior to Richelieu; he read all those pieces, and passed judgment upon them as if he had not been the subject, praised some

and laughed heartily over others where the point was particularly good.

Richelieu laid satire too much to heart, and thereby put his peace ever in the power of the libertine wits of the age.

When Mazarin, however, saw the Mazarinade of Scarron (on account of which his pension was suppressed as we have mentioned,) his wonted appearance of indifference forsook him; for he there saw *laid before* him in one picture all the faults he had committed, and all the affronts and mortifications which he had received. At this he was wounded most sensibly, and, as we have seen, failed not to give Scarron a proof of his resentment.

The poet soon sued for pardon of the Cardinal and the Queen, but his tardy submission was deservedly vain. He afterwards had recourse to Fouquet, the Mæcenas of his age, a liberal man, who ever held out a generous protection to men of letters, and often rendered them the most signal services. He was Superintendent of Finance for some time under Louis the Fourteenth, but was tried and imprisoned shortly after the death of Mazarin.

In his disgrace Fouquet still retained his liberal character, as the following anecdote fully testifies:—The pension of a man of letters which had been granted through Fouquet's representations, was suppressed by his rival and successor in office, and notwithstanding the disapprobation such a course was likely to draw on him from those in office, and the present powerless state of his benefactor, he defended Fouquet with zeal, and openly testified his gratitude to him. On being informed of this, the

disgraced minister retrenched from the little which remained to him, and begged Mademoiselle de Scuderi to remit a considerable sum to this gentleman. She conducted the affair with feeling and politeness, by commissioning a friend to go to his house, and having found means, after conversing with him for some time, to leave, without being perceived, a sum adequate to what he had lost upon the table.

About this time the success of two of Scarron's plays made up in some degree for the loss of his pension, having had an amazing degree of popularity.

He also regained some of the patrimony which had been unjustly kept from him, and a prebend in the diocess of Mans completed a provision amply sufficient for his wants. In addition to these, however, his works brought him a considerable sum, which he called his Marquisate of *Quinct*, (from the name of his bookseller.)

To find a man charged with infirmities, always replete with wit and good humour, was so singular an exhibition, that many were induced to visit Scarron, at first from mere motives of curiosity, but most of them finding him so agreeable a companion, repeated their attentions for the pleasure of his society. Among these were people of the first rank, of both sexes, who willingly climbed three stories to pay their respects to him. He lived at the time of which we are speaking, at apartments elegantly furnished in the Rue St. Louis.

Bowed by infirmities, his head hung down upon his breast, and his knees were also bent and contracted. Thus gathered up, he wrote on a board

which rested on two iron branches fixed to his elbow chair.

Many ludicrous portraits were published of him by his adversaries, of which he was not ignorant, and was ever the first to enjoy the laugh they afforded.

The character of Scarron, was one we may not contemplate without pity and regret. His sufferings were the just and natural consequences of his vicious indulgences. That they were borne with patience and fortitude, there cannot be a doubt, but it is to be lamented that he devoted nature's best gift to such frivolous and ephemeral purposes. He had a tender heart, a lively imagination, and an inexhaustible fund of cheerfulness. Poverty neither created in him peevishness nor dejection, and he was satirical without the slightest tincture of malice. Such was the husband whom Mademoiselle D'Aubigné accepted at the age of fifteen.

Having now given a brief outline of the person, and the principal events in the life of the man Mademoiselle D'Aubigné chose as a husband, we will once more return to our more immediate subject. At the early age of fifteen, as we have before stated, Mademoiselle D'Aubigné entered into the married state, and it was now that the truth and splendour of her character burst forth. Had she entered into this engagement from any latent views of a selfish nature, merely to rid herself of the yoke of Madame de Neuillant, or to lead a life of freedom and licentiousness, she could not for such a purpose have been better situated; since she was surrounded by the young, the gay, the volatile, and many of the unprincipled of both sexes, who too often succeed

in gaining admittance to what is called "the best society," particularly in the capital of France.

Examples could easily have been found at all times to palliate such a course, and a beautiful girl married to such a man as Scarron, would never have wanted defenders, had such been her inclination. What would appear to us not only improper, but perfectly disgraceful, as the admission of such a person as Ninon de L'Enclos into society, was permitted and encouraged by the manners of the country and the times; but nothing could induce Madame Scarron to deviate from her fixed and noble principles, and with every temptation to err, she maintained the even tenor of her way along the high, but almost deserted path of moral rectitude.

Her predominant passion was a love of fame, and her highest ambition to be esteemed for the preeminence of her merits; and although there might be a mixture of vanity in the great desire she felt, and the exertions she made to acquire a reputation, yet it was of a kind so noble, so free from the frivolity of her sex, and so morally unexceptionable, that it deserved our highest encomiums. She was fond of applause, it is true, but was more delighted at reigning through her virtues than in charming by her beauty. Eagerly desirous to attain this object of her ambition, she sacrificed all her inclination to it. She wished that every thing she did should be as perfect as possible, and used to observe, at an after period—"I am not happy enough to act well at all times; for virtue's sake, I like to be thought well of, my great desire is to make myself a good name; no one has ever carried it so far. This aspiration leads me to suffer the martyrdom

of a thousand self-imposed constraints, and it is perhaps to punish me, that God has permitted my elevation, as if he had said, 'Thou hast coveted praises and honours, thou shalt have them even till they overwhelm thee.'"

Madame Scarron's marriage, though in many other respects ill assorted, possessed the advantage of introducing her to much of the best company France could then furnish. She was far from wishing to avoid it, as she was superlatively gifted in conversational talents; and the honour of being admitted to her society was much coveted by the talented and fashionable section of the Parisian world. Indeed, so numerous and even irksome did these applications become, that frequent excuses were often made to men of the highest station and noblest families in the country.

Individuals of all professions congregated in her house. Men of the army and navy, the pulpit, the bar, and the study, there met to relax their minds and acquire the polish of society. At their little suppers a light and witty gaiety presided, with that easy enlivening change of subjects which is the life and soul of conversation. On such occasions every one ordered his own dish, so that there was variety and satisfaction, if not regularity and studied ostentation.

We must not forget, however, that considerable latitude was indulged in all these meetings, and we may believe, that notwithstanding the freedom of the age, a delicate mind like that of Madame Scarron was not unfrequently shocked by the conversation that passed. She generally suffered most from the licentious style of her husband. He was

nevertheless diverting in all situations, even grief and anger could not quell the facetious tide of his fruitful imagination, and he possessed an inexhaustible combination of ideas of the most humorous kind, which he expressed with the rapidity of lightning. But he was often excessively offensive in his language, which Madame Scarron exerted herself to correct by her modesty and gentleness—for neither the honour of her sex nor character would permit her to submit to it. To succeed in this attempt she wisely limited her society, and endeavoured to confine her circles as far as possible to persons of an amiable or useful character. In this purified medium she herself shone but the more refulgent, and was regarded as the vivifying spirit that gave light and life to all their meetings. Possession of talent but enabled its owner to estimate more highly the just principles, amiable disposition, and fine sense of the wife of Scarron.

Her general conversation was gay, polite, and dignified, and by it every other pleasure was absorbed. Even deficiencies ceased to be remembered when she amused the auditory. "Madam," said one of her servants, in a whisper one day, "another story to those gentlemen, for we have no roast today."

However Scarron was admired and sought after, the burlesque strain in which he indulged gave his wife much pain, inasmuch as it was the mirth of a buffoon, and not that of a gentleman. There was nothing she feared more than contempt, and she lived in constant dread of a portion of the contumely which this conduct could not fail of producing, attaching itself in some way to herself, and she there-

fore watched with careful anxiety to take advantage of every opportunity that might occur, of repairing the evil occasioned by her husband's humour.

At a period of life when pleasure is generally sought in variety and change, Madame Scarron contented herself with the same society; nor would the jealous notion of her duty which she possessed, permit her to leave her husband in the state of health he then was. That he felt and appreciated her kindness is placed beyond a doubt, for he speaks of her in his works with generous esteem and grateful tenderness. Thus, under the name of Urania, he introduces her in a distich translated as follows:—

> Urania, gentle maid, whom gracious Heav'n,
> To sooth my griefs and ease my cares has giv'n,
> Urania worthy of a happier state,
> And better husband at the hands of fate.

The Queen-mother having heard of her marriage, said, "Mademoiselle D'Aubigné will be a most useless appendage to Scarron's household. Never was a more erroneous opinion volunteered by human lips, for when he was ill she was his nurse; when recovering his companion; and when re-established in his ordinary health she was his secretary and reader.

Without doubt it was to this life of exemplary compliance, wearying fatigue, and laborious study, that she owed the perfecting of that conciliating, active, and enlightened mind, which was her principal ornament; and her husband seems to have helped her to much instruction, if we may judge by her varied acquisitions. She with him improved an already formed habit of writing her own language

with elegance and facility; learnt Italian, Spanish, and Latin; but was so far from being pedantic, that in conversation she seemed to know nothing but her own tongue. In addition to this, she constantly heard the discussions and opinions of a body of the first men Paris could furnish. Scarron was no man's competitor, his genius was peculiar to himself, and nobody dreamed of rivalling him. When they met, they canvassed with temper and discretion the questions brought forward, which consisted of the works of the day, the state of the arts, &c.; and in their criticisms they often reversed the decrees of the academy. At these gatherings, Scarron read his new compositions, which he called "trying his books," and thus availed himself of many valuable hints before he sent them forth to the world.

In this school Madame Scarron made astonishing progress and laid the foundation for her future greatness. Her naturally refined ideas were now imbodied in the most correct expression and elegant style of reasoning, and in proportion to her own improvement was the delight her husband took in her society; she thus gained a sort of sovereignty over his lucubrations, which she perused very carefully, generally offering such observations as to induce him readily to acquiesce in her judgment. It has been asserted, that after this period his works assumed a more delicate and correct cast than before. Of such are the last books of Virgil travestie, the sequel of the Comic Romance, Leander and Hero, all written posterior to the year 1651.

His manners also underwent a beneficial change, and he gradually habituated himself to a certain

degree of decency, which without cramping his mirth made his satire less gross and offensive. She steadily persevered in her attempts to check his propensity to coarseness, for when the company was not to her taste, and she saw him in the humour to transgress the rules of modesty, she would abscond for a time and pay a visit to some female friend, thus quietly but effectually intimating her distaste of the conversation.

Scarron had turned his benefice and the small estate which he had recovered into money, and by this means raised a capital, but had too little economy not to break in upon it; and the capital was too small to bear such encroachments as he repeatedly made. Thus was he soon reduced to a few small life annuities, while the produce of his books served only to discharge trifling debts and provide for the merest necessaries. Now as she had often, during her early life, did Madame Scarron begin to feel the pressure of want, and was many times so far reduced as to be under the necessity of pawning her clothes to purchase bread and fuel. Their subsistence had in fact become mainly dependent upon books, verses, jests, adulations, and dedications. Poor Madame Scarron had been severely trained in the school of misfortune, and bore her poverty without meanness or dejection, and without a murmur against her husband; but it was a source of much distress to her to be obliged to *receive* favours, when her noble and generous mind only coveted to *confer* them. She was mortified too to see that Scarron could demand gratifications from his superiors, as they were styled, but whose superiority was far from apparent to her own ideas.

Though Scarron's friends laughed at his sallies, and in a measure pitied his circumstances, yet it seldom led them so far as to relieve him; they were tired of his importunities and did not believe that his miseries could be real, when they were the cause of epigrams so full of mirth; or, that it was possible a man could really laugh at his own indigence and appear so gay in the evening, when he might not be able to procure money enough on the next morning to buy ink and paper.

His wife, though ashamed, was obliged to ask assistance, and places, pension, benefactions and offices were constantly solicited and as often missed or refused. The year 1653, however, was more fortunate for them than its predecessor. Fouquet, one of the most magnificent ministers France ever possessed, bestowed upon him a pension of sixteen hundred livres, and this minister's lady also showed Madame Scarron much kindness.

The value of Madame Scarron's character may not alone be estimated by her wit and talents, for brilliant though they were, they were far inferior to her virtue and moral dignity; and while the example they afford for the emulation of her sex must engage their affections by its calm domestic nature, its universal application and beneficial tendency must at the same time demonstrate its worth and easy attainment. Surrounded by a crowd of men distinguished by either or all of the recommendations of birth, fortune, and abilities, and comprehending every shade of agreeableness, the utmost temptations were actively employed to lure her into the paths of vice, and every art was put in practice for that purpose which the most depraved skill could

suggest. Each in turn discovered the futility of his efforts, and found that no consideration whatever could draw her aside from the strict line of duty. They doubted not that she must dislike such a husband, and their vanity taught them to believe that her desire to please sprung from a wish to attract their regard; but she was not satisfied with avoiding their snares, she knew how to confine them within the bounds of respect.

Christina, Queen of Sweden, paid her a very elegant compliment, and ranked her among the few women in Paris whom she honoured with her esteem. On Menage introducing Scarron and his wife to that Princess, "I permit you," said she, "to fall in love with me;—the Queen of France created you her patient, I will create you my Orlando."

"You do well," replied he, "to give me the title, for I should have taken it."

Christina then looking steadfastly at Madame Scarron, said to the Countess de Bregi, "Did not I guess right, that nothing less than a queen could make a man unfaithful to this lady?" She added, that she was not surprised, that with the most amiable woman in Paris, he was, in spite of his infirmities, the merriest man in France.

The attachment of Scarron to his wife daily increased. Madame Fouquet earnestly desired her company at Mandé; but he, who had no other comfort, no preservative against melancholy but the conversation of a wife whom he adored, strongly opposed it.

From the city her reputation had spread to the court, and the Mancinis (nieces of Cardinal Mazarin) became desirous of her conversation, particularly

Marie, who earnestly invited her to spend a few days at Brouage. She little thought that a lady so universally admired could not afford the charge of such a journey, and Madame Scarron, to be excused, as usual pleaded indisposition.

Scarron's infirmities, instead of diminishing, now gradually increased, and hastened him towards the termination of that painful struggle which through life he had endured. His wife had done every thing to bring him to a serious consideration of an after life. He received the sacrament devoutly, and she seems to have awakened in him some sense of religion, but though she did much, his levity did not leave him to the last. He was often startled with doubts, which she answered with the tenderness of a wife and the seriousness of a divine. "If there is a hell," he said, "it cannot be for me, since, without you I should have found this life a hell."

One of his friends who was going with the court to Guyenne, came to take leave of him. Scarron said to him, "I am sensible I shall soon die. I could go out of this world without repining, did I not leave behind me a woman of merit, whom I love, and have so much reason to love. I commit her to your care; I recommend her to all my friends. Alas! she has neither fortune nor hope! what will become of her? His strength and voice failed him fast, but he was still cheerful, observing to those who wept round, "I shall never make you cry so much as I have made you laugh."

He saw with a serene eye the approach of death; and when it was necessary to take leave of his wife, he thanked her for all her services, desired her to forgive all his faults, and making an effort to take

her by the hand, said, "I beg that you will sometimes think of me; I leave you destitute, but Heaven will provide for you. Virtue is not the road to earthly happiness, nevertheless be always virtuous. When men are like me on the verge of eternity, they then feel that this is the only good thing. In this hope I die content. Pray for me!" and in a moment after he expired.

Madame Scarron wept his loss with great sincerity; his character was not in a general point of view estimable, but to her he had been uniformly kind and tender, and the strain of affection and respect in which he had spoken of her in his last moments, called up in her bosom a deep feeling of sorrow and gratitude.

We now again behold this estimable woman exposed to the horrors of indigence. It is true her friends offered her both money and interest, but she felt the pride so natural to an independent and noble mind too strongly to avail herself of these offers, and she preferred receiving the aid of equals to that of superiors. From the former she considered it as a loan, which she hoped to repay, but how could she return the gifts of the latter, to whom she was an object of admiration as well as pity, without. concessions, incompatible with the character which was so dear to her?

The beauty of Madame Scarron was at this time in its full lustre, and her cotemporaries speak of her personal charms in a high strain of admiration. "She had," says one, "in addition to the most regular and lovely features, and splendid freshness of complexion, a peculiarly sweet and intelligent smile, which displayed the finest teeth in the world. The

expression of her countenance was lively, noble, and majestic; her face was a fine oval, with a nose delicately inclining to the aquiline; her eyes full, dark, and brilliant; and so well did they convey her thoughts, that whatever she said went directly to the heart of those she addressed. Her stature was above the middle size, her hands and arms finely turned, her action dignified yet graceful, and in every thing she did there was an indefinable air, of which even old age could not deprive her. Perhaps the greatest charm was the constant emanation of a generous mind, for she was sincerity itself, and despised every thing like artifice. Gay and innocent in thought, she was easy in conversation, and witty without effort, but the purity of her character forbade all boldness or license. Her dress was modest in the extreme, and Madame de Richelieu, upon seeing her uncovered during a fainting fit, brought on by the heat of the apartment, paid her the compliment of saying, 'that till now, she had believed that Madame Scarron wished to hide her defects, and not to veil her perfections.'"

The many and severe afflictions of her early life had left a sort of melancholy feeling behind it, but it was a melancholy so sweet that it spread irresistible tenderness over all she did, and gave a particular interest to her manners. In short, Madame Scarron was one of the most amiable and beautiful women of her time, and from her misfortunes and severe struggles, undoubtedly one of the most interesting.

After the death of her husband, her friends, by inviting her to spend her time with them, not only were serviceable, but preserved her from many

annoyances to which she might have been exposed, and her talent often enabled her to show her sense of their kindnesses.

Still she led a life of precarious dependance but little suited to her worth, or congenial with her feelings, and to relieve her from this state of subjection, her late husband's pension as patient to the Queen was applied for. It had been withdrawn from Scarron after having written the Mazarinade, and but slight hopes were entertained of success. Nevertheless it was thought that the widow's poverty might have some claim upon the Cardinal's lenity.

No such generous motive, however, swayed the mind of Mazarin; upon her petition being presented, he read it, and being told in answer to a question he put, that Madame Scarron was in good health, he replied, that "she was therefore disqualified from inheriting the pension of a man who was always sick." And with this poor and despicable jest he gratified his malice by heaping insult upon misfortune.

Her friends now saw no resource but in the generosity of the Superintendent of the Finances. Monsieur Fouquet had, as we have seen, bestowed a pension upon Scarron. She was advised therefore to apply to him, but his character, though a generous man, was libertine to the highest excess; and consequently the application seemed to her the very acme of disgrace. The care of her honour and virtue and the ardent wish she had to distinguish herself by an irreproachable line of conduct alike forbade it.

But she now felt the bitterness of dependance,

which obliges the mind itself to bend to the most mortifying compliances. Those who had been kind in her distress, urged her to adopt this measure, and gratitude to them, with the hope of being no longer burdensome, excited her strongly to comply, especially as in her slight intercourse with Madame Fouquet, the Superintendent had taken no part.

Accordingly, though with great reluctance, she went to the house of Fouquet, but in such mean and negligent attire, that the person who should have introduced her felt ashamed to execute his task. Whatever might be her motives, whether to escape notice, while she complied with the advice of her friends, or to owe her success to compassion alone is uncertain; but Fouquet received her as a great man, too much occupied to notice the beauty she concealed, or the indigence which might have raised his pity. He promised like a courtier, and like a courtier forgot his promises.

It happened, however, some days afterwards, that in casting his eye over her petition, he recollected that Scarron had had a very handsome wife, whom he had somewhere seen, and the profound misery so faithfully described in the petition, which would have filled the bosom of a truly generous and honourable man with sympathy, served only to excite hopes that through necessity, she might be beguiled into the paths of vice. But he little knew the woman he intended for his victim.

Great people have, unfortunately for themselves and others, those about them who will always obey their commands, be they right or wrong. To one of these the Superintendent gave his instructions. This person found Madame Scarron, and told her

that Monsieur Fouquet was extremely sorry to hear of her misfortunes, and felt very much for her situation. That it grieved him much to say he had it not in his power to remedy them, for the number of pensioners were so great, that he could not set the example of such bad economy as to entail pensions upon widows. That it was certainly true he did confer benefits upon women, and even women of the first rank, but then the state received services from them which indemnified him.

To this the messenger added, that if he might be permitted to speak freely, he would advise her to make acquaintance with some of those ladies who received the benefactions of Monsieur Fouquet. This perfidious advice tended to make Madame Scarron to fall into the snare, the more so, as Fouquet had appeared so little to notice her, that she imagined he could have no interested motive. She therefore thanked the messenger with gratitude, while she revolved what had passed in her mind with that sort of indolent hope which is commonly felt by those crushed with affliction. Her acquaintance was speedily sought by Madame de Montigni, the unsuspected agent and creature of the Superintendent.

Her conversation was general at first, then by degrees drawn on to the subject of Fouquet, she greatly cried up his merit, and made many pathetic reflections upon the inconveniences of poverty, contrasting them with the happiness of an independent widow. In an artful manner during the conversation, she endeavoured to engage Madame Scarron to see him again, but she was answered with so much good sense and so little ostentation

that Madame de Montigni turned off, by long and palliative discourse, the contempt with which she felt herself covered.

Fouquet was not used to meet with such resistance, and was persuaded that all hearts were within the reach of gold. "I have," he was accustomed to say, "at my disposal, all the wealth of the kingdom, and of course the tariff of all the virtues."

Having little reliance therefore on woman's firmness, difficulties animated him, and he ever imagined he should soon find a method to succeed. After the result of Madame Montigni's interview had been communicated to him, he sent Madame Scarron a case of diamonds of considerable value, under a fictitious name. She could not imagine from whom so valuable a gift came. She had often received considerable presents from unknown persons; many from the Duke of Brancas, and the generous friends from whom they came were often long concealed. She looked upon this gift, however, as from the hand of Providence.

Some days after, however, Madame de Montigni called upon her, and admiring her jewels, informed her that this was a present from the Superintendent. Madame Scarron blushed, and said with much emotion, that she would immediately send it back. Madame de Montigni represented that it would be offering him an affront, which he by no means merited; that this was his way of behaving towards the most respectable ladies, and that the gift was a simple token of esteem. The art of Madame de Montigni imposed upon Madame Scarron, and induced her to view the matter in the light she sought to give it. Her visit was according to pro-

mise returned by Madame Scarron on the following morning; but what was her surprise when she saw the Minister enter! she perceived immediately that this interview was concerted, though they assured her it was only a happy chance.

Notwithstanding these assurances, she quitted the house with the greatest precipitation; and when she recounted this occurrence, she used to say that she never felt an emotion of joy in her life, equal to that she experienced when she had returned the diamonds, which were intended as the price of her disgrace.

Once more all her hopes had vanished, and she saw nothing but poverty and dependence, or vice besetting her, and she recommended her forlorn state to that God who never deserts those that put their trust in him!

The truth of her husband's words returned in full force to her mind, she saw the justness of his sentiments in regard to her exposed situation; felt deeply the loss of his protection, when she looked around with the most desolate feelings, and could find no one in whom she could confide.

Still, the consolation of having acted in the best manner she was able to do, of having struggled through scenes of destitution, without yielding to the temptations that the profligate had thrown in her way, and of having endured the bitter gripe of want, without stooping to any thing which could leave a stain upon her name, was such a balm to her mind, that she shed strangely mingled tears of pain and pleasure on the reflections her conduct induced.

But even now, when the future was shrouded in unbroken gloom, when no hope appeared, and her

friends had laid aside all thoughts of procuring her a solid settlement, relief was nigh at hand.

By one of those fortunate accidents which sometimes occur most seasonably, the Queen having mentioned casually the name of Scarron, the Baron de la Garde seized the moment to represent to her, that this famous valetudinarian, formerly honoured by her bounty, had left a widow extremely beautiful, and very worthy of her majesty's compassion, and who had long maintained a virtuous struggle against adversity. This discourse was seconded on all sides; for many, personally unknown to Madame Scarron, had heard of her character and unfortunate circumstances. They supplicated the Queen to re-establish in her favour the pension her husband had so justly forfeited by the licentiousness of his pen.

These prayers were so well-timed and so pressing, that her Majesty asked what the amount of the annuity was. Some one replied that it was two thousand livres. The fact was, it was only fifteen hundred.

The Queen immediately ordered the payment to be resumed, and forthwith sent her the amount of the first quarter.

Madame Scarron went to Val de Grace to thank her Majesty; and there was not a person at the court who did not pretend to have been of service to her.

"My gratitude," said she, "to those to whom I did not owe this benefit, would be a robbery to those from whom I really received it."

While, however, she was being warmly congratulated upon this acquisition, Madame de —— judging probably from her own notions, that the

friends of a young and beautiful woman had selfish views in serving her, said aloud, "Oh! well, if the Queen chooses to give a pension to the loveliest woman and the greatest coquette in Paris, she has made the best choice."

Madame Scarron heard the malicious observation, and it poisoned all the joy she felt. The praise to her beauty made little amends for the insult to her character, and she was deeply wounded at the cruelty and injustice of this public attempt to deprive her of the good name which she had striven against every adverse circumstance to build up: she conceived a stronger aversion to the lady than she had ever before felt for any one human being, and was so much affected, that she became ill upon seeing or hearing of her, or even in passing her hotel.

"You are now," said her Confessor to her, "fixing a penance upon yourself, for the crimes of Madame ——."

The Queen's generosity, though it had not made her rich, yet it made her happy in her independence; she retired to the nunnery of the Hospitalers, in the rue St. Jacques, where she lived at a small expense, and could follow the bent of her inclination for pious exercises and acts of benevolence. She aspired not to luxuries, and set aside the fourth part of her pension for the poor, to expiate as she said the falsehood by which that part had been procured.

It would appear that Providence has ordained in the moral as in the physical world, the same gradations from light to darkness, and from darkness to light.

In the one, the great luminary of day increases

in warmth and brilliancy, from the dawn till he reaches the meridian, when all nature is pervaded by his beams, and is cheered and enlivened by his light. But when this point is gained, his decline is in fact begun. By imperceptible degrees he withdraws the light and warmth he gave, and soon leaves the world enshrouded in its original darkness.

So in the infancy of nations, the star of reason struggles through the clouds of ignorance and superstition, till the human mind is fully enlightened. For a time that star seems stationary, yet is but too surely retrograding with hasty decline, to its primary state of obscurity.

At the period of which we write, France was emerging from the darkness and barbarism of the middle ages; but still calculations of nativity, prophecies of great future events were promulgated, and even the insignificant occurrences of every-day life were foretold with confidence, and looked for with eagerness by the credulous portion (by no means a small one) of both sexes. Madame Scarron had undoubtedly a mind of a superior cast, yet she has furnished one singular instance of a prediction in regard to herself. Probably she put little belief in it, for the prophet had no great pretensions to a knowledge of the occult sciences, but still it made some impression on her mind. It is as follows: she was accustomed frequently to come out of her retreat to pay a visit either at the Hotel D'Albret or de Richelieu. Upon one of these occasions she met with a mason, of the name of Barbé, who dabbled in astrology. He had before often been employed at Scarron's house, and when there, struck with the face and noble figure of his wife, he said one day, "That lady is married

to a cripple, but she is born to be a queen." His imagination became so excited as to suggest to him that he could tell future destinies by the stars, and being one day at work at the Hotel D'Albret, near Madame Scarron's apartment, he boldly entered her room, when two ladies were with her, and told her in the tone of an oracle, "After many griefs and many misfortunes, you will mount to an elevation of which you now have no conception. A king shall see you, love you, and you shall reign, but your fortune will never be great." To this prophecy he added singular and minute details, which astonished and diverted her, and, in spite of her good sense, she felt a perceptible emotion, upon which they rallied her.

"Ladies," said Barbé, "it would be more fit that you should kiss the hem of her garment than make a jest of her." As soon as the prediction was fulfilled, she made inquiries for the mason, but he was dead. She, however, showed much kindness to his children.

The Marquis de C——, a very rich man, but one who had led a most irregular life, had come, after youth and health had been dissipated in vicious and enervating pleasures, to the resolution of marrying, for the purpose of ending his days in the *enjoyment of domestic happiness!* Blind to the fallacy of such expectations he cast his eyes on Madame Scarron, not doubting that an indigent widow would be but too ready to accept his hand.

He engaged the Marechal D'Albret in his interest, who made the first proposals, and thought to a certainty that Madame Scarron would embrace them with pleasure. She, however, positively declined

doing so, and upon being pressed by Madame D'Albret, she declared, that she would never unite herself to a man without morals or religion, deficient in sense, and irascible in temper, and that she preferred a happy mediocrity to great riches and still greater cares. The Marshal earnestly represented his high rank and limited talents, which would make him entirely subservient to her inclination. She answered, that she did not regard birth without merit and had no desire to govern. Madame D'Albret became piqued by her resistance, and gave way to reproaches; in her anger she told her, she had not always been so delicate, that she was spoilt by the world, and had before married a poetical buffoon. At this unexpected sally Madame Scarron burst into tears, oppressed by a variety of feelings which even she herself could have but ill-defined, and Madame D'Albret, who had been excited to this sudden gust from a wish to see her friend placed in a state of independence, said a thousand kind things to repair the offence she had given; but the blow was struck, and for some time resented. The Duchess of Richelieu, however, succeeded in reconciling them eventually, and the Marquis of C—— was never more pressed upon her in such a manner.

At the death of the Queen-mother, Madame Scarron was once more reduced to indigence. The Duchess of Richelieu, however, with her usual friendship, offered her an abode; but it was gratefully declined, she told the Duchess that nothing but a recluse life could suit her in the state in which she found herself by the death of the Queen. "My grief," said she, "is of a different kind from that of the court. I weep for my benefactress, my tranquillity, and my happiness."

She now endeavoured to support herself by doing fine work, and lived with the utmost penuriousness upon the produce. When the Marquis de C—— heard of the death of the Queen, he again preferred his suit, in hopes that circumstances might have wrought a change in his favour. Madame Scarron's friends greatly blamed her for persisting in her refusal, but she had weighed and considered every thing, and preferred want to such a partner. She says in a letter to Madame de Richelieu, "I swear, madame, in the presence of God, that could I have foreseen the death of the Queen, I would not have accepted that offer." She complained much of the cruelty of being blamed for avoiding a man of birth and fortune, but who was devoid of sense and manners, who loved nothing but sensual gratifications, and was esteemed by none but profligate youths—the prey and dupe of women, haughty, choleric, avaricious, and prodigal. She felt hurt that they should dare to compare him to Scarron, who upon the whole she ventured to assert was an excellent husband; for without wealth he drew round her good company, which the other with all his means would have driven away. Scarron, she said, had a good and cheerful temper, and a solidity which the world did not appreciate. The Marquis had neither gaiety nor solidity, and in conversation only made himself ridiculous. The too great freedom of Scarron she had corrected, his probity would stand any test, and his generous disinterestedness was not to be matched. She found that although some commended and some blamed, yet none pitied or assisted her. She writes thus pathetically upon the subject to Madame de Riche-

lieu, "Were the refusal to be given, I would still do the same, notwithstanding the extreme poverty by which Heaven is pleased to try me; I am not guilty, but I am unfortunate, and that is indeed sufficient!"

The re-establishment of the pension was still perseveringly solicited, and many most eloquent petitions written by the Abbé Tistu were presented; they always began with these words, "The widow Scarron most humbly supplicates your Majesty;" and at last, quite fatigued, the King said angrily in reply, "Shall I hear nothing spoken of but the widow Scarron?" For some time after, "As importunate as the widow Scarron," was a cant phrase at court.

Every one talked of serving her, but no one really did it. The petitions were seldom so much as read; and on learning this, she exclaimed, "Were it my fate to be in high favour, how differently should I treat the unfortunate! How little are men to be depended on! When I wanted nothing, I might have obtained, as it seemed, any thing I pleased; but now that I want every thing, all is denied me! I believe God calls me to him by these trials, for he calls his children by adversity. Let him call me, I will follow him through the most austere trials; I am as tired of the world as the courtiers can be of me."

Her oldest friends began to be weary of receiving a person always armed with a petition, and she felt severely the mortifications to which she was reduced. At length, when the Princess of Nemours became Queen of Portugal, the frowns of fortune abated, and the soothing light of hope once more fell upon her path.

The Princess loved Madame Scarron, and wished

to take her with her. Misfortune had made all countries indifferent to that lady, and the day was already fixed for their departure. She had nothing, she said, to leave behind but friends to whom she was a burden, and people who knew not how to respect the unfortunate. Ere she left France, however, she requested a friend to procure her the honour of an introduction to Madame de Montespan, "that she might not leave her country," she said, with fortunate adulation, "without seeing its greatest wonder." This compliment was repeated, and upon her introduction by the Marchioness of Thiange, Madame de Montespan expressed great surprise at her going to so remote a place, adding, "My dear child, you must stay here; Albert has spoken to me about you; he has acquainted me with your merit."

Madame Scarron thought in her own mind that it would have been better to have told her of her wretched condition. This therefore she with dignity described, and received an attentive hearing. She mentioned the loss of her pension and her vain solicitations, and that she was about to seek a decent subsistence abroad. Madame de Montespan was affected with the story, and desired her to enlarge upon it in a memorial, which she promised to present to the King. He received it graciously, and the consequence was that the pension was restored. In speaking of it, Madame Scarron observes, "Two thousand livres is a sum more than sufficient for my solitude, much more so for my salvation.'

She now accepted an apartment at the Hotel Richelieu, and being of a serious turn of mind she put herself under the direction of the Abbé Gobelin,

who was the most famous and severe confessor of the time, but possessed of a naïve character. One of his spiritual pupils was the witty and agreeable Madame de Coulanges, of whom the Abbé with equal wit and simplicity observed,

"Every one of this lady's sins is an epigram."

Madame Scarron's devotion was sincere and exemplary, and distinguished from the kind then so prevalent in France, the majority of whose devotees were persons who had spent their prime in unthinking levity, or vicious pursuits, and strove by an appearance of the most rigorous penance to blot out the remembrance of their faults and vices; their lives presenting the two extremes of unbridled licentiousness, and the most austere mortification, the *first* as much as possible prolonged, the *last* as much as possible retarded. Unlike these the Abbé found Madame Scarron cheerfully penitent and mildly devout, alike relaxing the austerity of the one course, and curbing the sinful propensities of the other. The acquaintance she had formed with Madame de Montespan, brought about an event which called for all the prudence and consideration Madame Scarron was mistress of.

We are told that she had ceased to think of her new acquaintance as a friend, when it was known that she had formed a dishonourable connexion with the King. But with the homage which vice naturally pays to virtue, Madame de Montespan pitched upon Madame Scarron to rear and educate her children by Louis. The choice was not quite agreeable to the King, but the favourite knew she

could not have made a better, and it was proposed through Madame de Hudicour.

Madame Scarron was extremely unwilling to listen to it, she disliked the mystery and secrecy it required, and positively refused to take the charge of Madame de Montespan's children, unless the King himself ordered her to do it. At this time, it must be borne in mind, that the will of the monarch was absolute in France. But though from necessity and the imperiousness of custom, she might submit to the will of her sovereign, she still retained an acute feeling, as to the distinctions between right and wrong, and used every endeavour to avoid the charge. Even Louvois, who was then in the plenitude of his power, endeavoured to remove her scruples, but did not prevail: it was a case of conscience, in which a minister could have *no* control.

As a Catholic, she determined to be guided in some degree by her confessor, and consulted him how she could extricate herself from the difficulty. He replied, that to hide the weakness of Madame de Montespan was rather an act of charity than a sin. But Madame Scarron still retained her original ideas, and her consent was not yet gained. She reserved her compliance until she was expressly commanded by the King's own voice.

She was consequently ordered to come to court, and the King directed her to take charge of the infant which Madame de Montespan would give into her care. Her prudent conduct on this occasion, and her pure reputation, prevented all suspicion of any connexion between her and Madame de Montespan, and she ultimately undertook a charge which condemned her to perfect retirement. That

she might properly perform the duties which had devolved upon her, she engaged a house in the most retired part of the suburb of St. Germain.

When the time arrived for her to receive the infant, she felt the dislike which is inherent in every ingenuous mind to be a party in any transaction requiring subterfuge and concealment, and which even the opinion of her confessor could not entirely remove. She thought too justly, not to be aware that the actions of a king ought to be able to bear the light, and be judged of by the same test as those of other people. But though a reformation was not in her power, she nevertheless exerted herself to prevent the contagion of bad example from spreading abroad from a quarter so influential on the welfare of society.

That such was the tenor of her thoughts will appear from the advice she afterwards gave to Louis himself, with all the boldness of virtue.

It were tedious to follow Madame Scarron through the arduous task in which she had engaged. It endured long and was surrounded by many difficulties; indeed after a time she found herself in a state of complete slavery, with the whole care and education of three children. In sickness she performed the duty of an affectionate mother, and in health of an enlightened instructer and diligent governess. The secret of their birth was faithfully kept, though the courtiers had curiosity and penetration enough to guess at the matter. Indeed the candour and openness of her nature was ill calculated for disguise, and as soon as any one mentioned the name of Madame de Montespan, she could not restrain her emotion, and her blushes often betrayed her.

Colbert, the Comptroller General of the Finances, as curious, and more interested in the matter than others, wished to satisfy himself if it were really true that Madame Scarron had the charge of some children, and accordingly entered her house one morning unannounced. She was at the time caressing one of the princes, but on the appearance of the Minister put him away as adroitly as she could, and the Comptroller was disappointed, or pretended not to see him.

Many circumstances arose to lead Louis to a more perfect knowledge of Madame Scarron's character. He became after a time so desirous of having the children brought up under his own eye, that he appointed them apartments in the palace. She there continued her cares with the same diligence and secrecy as before, and became every day more useful and agreeable to Madame de Montespan. The consequences, however, were of a character too singular for the one to foresee, or the other to wish for.

At first a pert observation made by Madame Hudicour gave Louis a secret aversion to the governess. On the occasion alluded to, having asked that lady where Madame de Montespan was,— "She is," replied Madame Hudicour, "with Madame Scarron, and they are both talking of things so learned and so sublime, that not understanding it, I have quitted them." This was enough for the Monarch, he admired wit and talent, but could little bear an ostentatious display of them, and regarding her as a female pedant, a woman spoilt by her connexion with a poet, he accustomed him-

self afterwards to call her the "learned lady," "the wit," &c.

"What amusement do you find," said he to Madame de Montespan, "in conversing so much with this would-be philosopher? Do you wish her to make you as pedantic as herself?"

Madame de Montespan also, through her ill temper and caprice, falsely represented Madame Scarron, to deprive her of the esteem of Louis. She was jealous of all merit, which rendered her incapable of friendship. This Madame Scarron knew, and she says on one occasion, "I dare not presume to speak to the King alone, Madame Montespan would never forgive me; and if I did, I could not permit myself to say any thing against her.

Circumstances, however, occurred occasionally to show the governess in a proper light. The King asked the nurse one day whose children these were that she took care of. She replied, "the lady's who lives with us, to be sure, for she can't bear their very finger to ache."

"And who is their father, do you think?" said he.

"I don't know that," replied she, "some Duke, I suppose, or President of the Parliament;" and the King laughed at the answer.

Another time Louis, who was a very tender father, amused himself with his son. Pleased with the boy's intelligence, he could not help saying, "you are a reasonable little fellow."

"How should I be otherwise!" replied the child, "since I am brought up by Reason herself?" The value of this reply was to Madame Scarron a hundred thousand francs.

The King, however, still laboured under the false impression that Madame Hudicour had given him, but not so blindly as formerly. He admitted Madame Scarron to his private parties, but still little cordiality existed between them. An incident at length occurred which destroyed the prejudices so long fostered by Louis, and gave him a clearer insight into her character. The fine open and gentle temper of Madame Scarron was thrown away upon the favourite, who made her life miserable by the quarrels she sought with her; and the King upon witnessing the disagreement one day, being weary of such frequent dissensions, said to Madame de Montespan, "If she displeases you, why don't you send her away? Are you not mistress?" But this lady was conscious of the loss she should sustain by such a course, and endeavoured to appease her, though at the same time her vanity tempted her to display the power placed at her control, and she told her that the King had left the matter to her decision. Madame Scarron now felt herself deeply wounded by being thus completely placed under the tyranny of another, and declared decidedly that she would retire. Her friends conjured her to spare from ruin all her future prospects, but it was in vain. The King had offended her, and the King alone could appease the wrath he had aroused—she would yield to no other solicitation.

The esteem of others is often attracted when it is seen that we place a just estimate on our own honour, and Louis respected a woman who would recognise no authority but his own. He at once delivered her from the yoke which Madame de Montespan had imposed upon her, and desired that she

should render an account of the education of the princes to him only. In this intercourse he found her so amiable and free from the faults which had hitherto been urged against her, that he was entirely freed from the prepossessions engendered against "the learned lady," and at the same time charmed with her conversation, the strength and cultivation of her mind, and the sweetness, grace and dignity of her manners.

She still, however, wished to return to her own way of life, but the strong affection she had for the children, and the cruelties practised upon them by others, detained her. She says in a letter to the Abbé Gobelin, "I am quite sunk with melancholy, for they murder these poor infants before my face. I am incapable of preventing it. My tender affection for them renders me intolerable to those they belong to, and sometimes I determine to leave them to the management of their mother; but should I not offend God by thus abandoning them and betraying the confidence their father has placed in me?"

The presents with which Louis recompensed Madame Scarron's care of his children, she employed in purchasing the estate of Maintenon, fourteen miles from Paris, and ten from Versailles. This place she bought for two hundred and fifty thousand livres, and said on entering it, "here I shall die." The favour she possessed might have been the source of immense wealth to her, but she disliked amassing, and said, that the older she grew the more she despised it. A moderate independence was the extent of her ambition, and the surplus she employed in charitable purposes. She was so pleased with the purchase of her estate, that the King did not fail to

perceive it, and called her in public Madame de Maintenon. This raised the envy and jealousy of many of her enemies, who endeavoured to raise the belief that it was a concerted plan between herself and the Monarch, because she was ashamed of her husband's name. Shielded by her innocence, she feigned perfect ignorance of their malice, and made use of the signature of "Maintenon" only. They then called her in a whisper, "Madame de *Maintenant;*" but this change of name proved useful to her, for that of Scarron always presented a low and burlesque idea to the King's mind, and it would have been an obstacle to the elevation to that rank which Louis destined for her. It was necessary that the name of Madame Scarron should be obliterated ere she assumed the title of Marchioness de Maintenon. She was thenceforward treated by Louis with much confidence and distinction, which was increased by Madame de Montespan at this time absenting herself from court, through a sudden fit of devotion. The Duchess of Richelieu, who had reaped much benefit from her interest, regretted her retirement, and frankly expressed her sorrow to Madame de Maintenon, who reproved the shameful sentiment. "May she be the last who shall reign in so disgraceful a manner," said she. "I hope to convert her—and *you* also," added she, with a smile.

Louis was troubled at the circumstance, however, and knowing that every one placed confidence in Madame de Maintenon, desired to have some conversation with her.

Upon the subject being opened, she spoke to him of his mistress, of his duty to God, to his people, and to himself, with all the power and firmness of

virtue justified by disinterestedness; but in speaking against the King's love, she assailed her own authority, for her strongest tie to the court depended still upon Madame de Montespan.

Nevertheless, regardless of the advantages she deprived herself of by such an unpalatable course, she yielded to the enthusiasm of her nature, and animadverted pointedly on the baneful consequences which such a demoralizing example as the King's persistence in his present course would again furnish. When thus excited her eloquence was very great, adding to the most impressive and copious language a sweetness of countenance and radiance of eye that established a full conviction of her sincerity.

The persuasion which flows from the lips of a true friend, prompted by an energetic desire to see the object of its solicitude all that is good and great, is not easily resisted, and she so far succeeded in her endeavours, that she quitted not Louis till he had promised no more to recall Madame de Montespan. But after acknowledging the justice of all she had said, the weakness of human nature swayed even such a mind as his, and resuming the subject, "She loves me, and I love her still!" said the monarch, regrettingly.

"Sire!" said Madame de Maintenon, "if you love her, would you cause her irreparable loss and dishonour? All your treasures, nay, the world entire, is not worth one soul. Had she loved *you*, would she have seduced you into vice?"

The King, leaning upon a chimney-piece, listened with that attention which invites the boldness of truth. She profited by these favourable moments,

and again went on, "I am permitted, I know, to plead the interest of my friend, but forbidden to give counsel to my King: however——"

She stopped, and endeavoured to read in the countenance of Louis if she was pardoned for her freedom, and allowed her to go on. He assured her that she might say all she wished, for he knew too well the sincerity of her zeal to be offended at any thing she advanced.

"I would say then, Sire," replied she,—"if the benefits with which your Majesty has loaded me can authorize me to testify my gratitude by the most important service—I would say to you, that an extreme devotion to the female sex sullies the glory of a Prince; that to take away the wife of a neighbour, is an injustice punished by all laws, but to take away the wife of a subject, is a crime which has no name.

"Well, Madam," replied the monarch, then truly great, "what you have said, in consideration of its truth, ceases to be offensive. I have loved too much like a sovereign—I have carried my authority too far. There was cowardice in prevailing through my power—there was injustice in abusing it. I see, I feel this, but all these things seem to have taken place in spite of my own will. I have loved too ardently, I have been no longer my own master —but it is but too apparent that I have been the master of others!"

"Truly," replied Madame de Maintenon, "you accuse yourself with so much candour, that your own reproaches are enough. But now that you are free, leave untouched, I conjure you, the only two resources which remain to Madame de Montespan.

Tears of penitence, which can alone reconcile her to God, and a voluntary retreat, which may regain the esteem of man. Cease, sire, to set the contagious example of libertinism, which loads our sex with corruption, and yours with baseness. A time will come," added she, "when transient pleasure will be succeeded by long remorse. Turn, sire, turn your eye towards the Carmelites, and see how guilt is punished."*

* The allusion here made by Madame de Maintenon was to Mademoiselle de la Valliere, then known as Sœur Louise de la Miseri-corde, at that time a recluse Carmelite. She had been Maid of Honour to Henrietta, sister of Charles of England, who had married the brother of Louis XIV. She was at the time of her introduction at court, young, simple, and timid, though lively and affectionate. Although resident in a court, famous for its gallantries and intrigue, she was, when the monarch first saw her, equally untainted with guilt and unpractised in disguise. Free and unsuspicious, her whole heart was unreservedly opened to the companions who surrounded her, and to whom she gave full credit for all the virtues which they seemed to possess. Her life passed in that pleasing sort of delirium which is excited in ardent minds by the perusal of those fascinating pictures of life delineated by genius, but which contrasts too strongly with its real circumstances. Thoughtless, and unversed, her eye penetrated not beneath the surface of those splendid scenes, which were constantly passing around her, and with their delusive dreams and dangerous pleasures, were the thoughts of the lovely Louise constantly occupied. Unfortunately for her the accomplishments and perfections of the Monarch himself caught her eye, and made a deep and lasting impression on her heart. His graceful manners, the noble and touching tone of his voice, his majestic figure, and lofty countenance, made him the most conspicuous and interesting man of his court, and there is every reason to believe that, La Valliere loved him even before he ever took the slightest notice of her. The first attentions which Louis paid her, appeared to have been in consequence of a vicious and cold-hearted arrangement made between him, the Countess de Soissons, and his sister-in-law; but the admiration which he at

Nothing could go more home, nothing be more calculated to awaken deep remorse in the bosom of

first affected soon became real, and the pursuit, which was at first intended to cover other intrigues, grew into an eager passion. He heard, we are told, the fair and unhappy La Valliere speaking his praises on one occasion, in a manner which could hardly be misunderstood, and though the hour and the circumstances in which he was placed, prevented him from distinguishing who was the speaker at the time, on entering the apartments of Madame the next morning, in one of the most lovely and interesting of the Maids of Honour he recognised the voice of his unknown eulogist. Would that it were our gratifying task to record the escape of the romantic and unsuspecting La Valliere! But such was not her fate, she fell a victim to his passion, after many unavailing struggles, and all that remained for her was, with a deep sense of her guilt and shame, to retire from a court where her grace, her worth, her sweetness, and many virtues had caused her to be adored, to wash out the stain of her weakness in penitent seclusion. She secretly left St. Germain, and shut herself up in the convent Chaillot, from whence she wrote a letter to Louis, equally dictated by passion, piety, and despair. By it the King was deeply moved, and begged of her to return. She obeyed his wish, and in a conference which lasted upwards of an hour, she expressed her firm determination of retiring from the world. Louis in vain prayed her to defer the execution of her intention, feelingly representing to her the hardship of a perpetual engagement, the delicacy of her health, and the facility of doing more good in the world than in retirement. "I have taken my part," said she, "too late for my fame, I trust it is yet in time for my salvation." Finding his efforts vain to induce a change in her determination, he entreated her to choose an order less austere, where she might exercise her virtue in the conduct of a religious house. She replied with a groan, "Lost as I am myself, can I conduct others?" Unsuccessful in his most urgent entreaties, Louis retired from his closet under great emotion, and with his eyes bathed in tears.

Madame de la Valliere, after communicating to a friend her intention of becoming a Carmelite, went on to say, "I have long meditated this design, and to prepare myself for the austerities of the state I am about to embrace, I wear sackcloth and a hair shirt. I

Louis, than this direct appeal to his own dear-bought experience; but his passions had been too long uncontrolled, for virtue herself to fix a barrier against them.

Madame de Montespan was recalled, and Madame Maintenon continued to conduct herself with the same truth and fidelity to the King, and the same care in regard to his family. She went to the waters of Barrèges with the Duc de Maine, who was of a delicate habit, and in passing through Bordeaux she observed, with a feeling of awe, the Chateau Trompette, where she had passed her first years. She remarked upon seeing it, "Though this may be called my cradle, I have known a worse prison."

After the return of Madame de Montespan to Court it was impossible for Madame de Maintenon to bear her hauteur. She exercised it on all, but

cannot do too much to expiate my crimes." She put her resolution into effect with the most heroic fortitude, and the whole court thronged to be witnesses of the sacrifice. Never did any one appear more charming, than she did at the moment of her profession. Her figure was the height of simple elegance, graceful and without a blemish, her hair fine, and her brilliant blue eyes, shaded by their long dark lashes, gave an expression at once so sweet, calm and tender, and at the same time humble and modest, that the pity and esteem of every heart was gained. Her whole appearance personified exactly the following line of La Fontaine's, "Et la Grace plus belle encore que la Beauté." "And Grace more beautiful than Beauty's self."

Tears started in every eye as she pronounced, with eager solemnity, the vows which bound her for ever. Madame La Valliere spent thirty-five years in the austerities of a religious life, under the name of Sœur Louise de la Misericorde, more honoured in the eye of the world, thus humiliated at the foot of the altar, than in the full sunshine of Louis's favor, seated near a throne with a crowd of flatterers suing eagerly for her smiles.

more particularly on that lady; "Is it," said she, one day, "a petty governess who dares to contradict *me*."

"If," replied Madame de Maintenon, "it is a shame to be governess to these children, what must it be to be their mother?" These quarrels induced Louis to remove her; and he appointed her Dame D'Autour (tire woman) to the Dauphiness. In this new employment she neglected not the smallest part of her duty, but cheerfully performed the most trifling offices, and found the days of her mortification turn to good account, for she was the only one who could disentangle the tresses of the Dauphiness without giving pain.

Louis was often at the toilette, from the attraction of the Dame D'Autour, and she often afterwards said with a smile, "One would scarcely believe how much my talents as a comber contributed to my elevation."

The King ultimately dropped his connexion with Madame de Montespan; and she finally quitted the court and retired to Paris, upon a pension of two thousand louis per month.

Such was the closing condition of that woman who had deserted her husband, giving up duty, honour, and fame, to ambition of a most worthless kind, the mean aspiration of courtly splendour! Her punishment was severe, but merited. Age, appalling to all, was to Madame de Montespan advancing in all its horrors. Unalleviated by the tenderness of domestic sympathy, or by the dutiful regards of children reared to virtue; alone and deserted in her hour of need, the remnant of her days was doomed to be spent in the society of strangers, an alien to

children—whose very existence was her reproach —and cast off by the man for whom she had sacrificed every thing valuable in life!

Some time after her appointment about the person of the Dauphiness, the Duchess de Richelieu, lady of honour to that Princess, died, and all the ladies of the court were eager to obtain the appointment.

Madame de Maintenon was considered too insignificant to fill it, but being deemed powerful enough to lend much aid, she became the secret depository of the sentiments and interests of each party.

Louis left the matter to the decision of the Dauphiness, and she at once determined upon Madame de Maintenon.

The King, who was charmed to put at the head of the court a woman he so highly esteemed, carried the news himself, on purpose to witness the pleasure it would produce. But in this he was disappointed, for with every mark of respect she declined the intended honour. "It would," she said, "excite envy against me, which I would rather disarm by moderation, than irritate by pride. And have I not," added she, "all the honours the place could confer in your Majesty's offer?"

"You shall at least, Madam, have the honour of your own refusal," said the King, and after dinner he related the circumstance to all his courtiers.

Day by day the king became more and more attached to her, and the letters which she received from his children after they were grown up, were, in the highest degree affectionate and respectful, and served to confirm his attachment. Her "Ad-

vice to the Duchess of Burgundy" was deemed of so excellent a character, so complete an epitome of feminine virtue, that after the Duchess' death, Louis paid her the highest compliment in his power, by requesting her to leave it in the apartment of that princess. "These, Madam," said he to her, "belong to the children. Surely my family ought to have something of your example. Your high rank gives you the means of doing a great deal of good, and of these means, edification is the chief."

Madame de Maintenon had now reached the height of power and greatness, and to these the Monarch added that of the highest rank, by espousing her, in the presence of Bontemps and de Forbin. Monsieur de Montchereriere attended as witness also.

In her new character she continued to be the greatest solace of the King's life, and he was lavish of kindness to one so worthy of his esteem and gratitude in every way. The good of others was always uppermost in her thoughts, and amongst the many proofs she has left we may instance the Maison de St. Cyr, in the Great Park of Versailles. It was founded by her, for the gratuitous education of two hundred and fifty young ladies of noble birth, but destitute of fortune.

This splendid building was finished in one year, two thousand five hundred workmen being kept constantly employed upon it. It immediately became the resort of the court, and before a most brilliant assemblage of nobility, magnificence, beauty, genius, and taste, Racine's tragedy of Esther was performed by her little girls, to the evident delight of his Majesty and the rest of the splendid audience. Madame de Maintenon often repeated these

parties, which were meant not only as a relaxation to her children (as she called the young ladies of St. Cyr,) but to Louis and herself, who were both weary of the fatigue and etiquette of a court, and could here, surrounded by the best and wisest characters, enjoy an amusement in which the finer feelings of the heart were amused and delighted.

Louis likewise built for her La Grand Trianon, in the Park of Versailles, which was then considered a most splendid specimen of royal munificence and taste, and is still the admiration of the French. There, during the declining years of herself and the King—the life of both being prolonged beyond the ordinary span of mortal existence, were passed many of the hours of this virtuous woman, who, though born in a prison and nurtured in misery, succeeded by an undeviating adherence through life to those just principles of moral rectitude which she had imbibed in her youth and which had grown with her growth, in becoming the wife of the most powerful sovereign in Europe, and one of the greatest Monarchs that had ever swayed the sceptre of France. The friend and protectress of the poor, her greatest pleasure consisted in diffusing happiness through a wide and boundless circle.

She now enjoyed the full confidence and affection of Louis. In his most severe attacks of illness she was his attendant, and during a convalescence after a severe operation, which he had borne with the greatest fortitude, while her tears flowed to witness his agony, she said, "Sire, you have suffered severely." "Yes," said he, "in seeing *you* suffer."

Volumes might be written upon the character of this noble woman, for the farther our researches extend, the more are we charmed with its beauty, and we may not conclude without giving a few more traits of her worth. During the whole course of her prosperity she never for one moment forgot her former poverty and distress, nor did she ever omit repaying a debt of gratitude. She would dilate with pleasure upon that period of her life when she was herself obliged to carry her husband's proofs to the printer, and would relate that one day when some ladies of rank were to call upon her, her washerwoman had obligingly borrowed some pieces of furniture for her, and refused to take any thing for the hire. Ashamed and shocked at having so long overlooked the circumstance, she ordered the poor woman to be searched for, when, after many inquiries, she was found in a garret, weighed down with old age and infirmities, and about to sell her last chair for bread. Madame de Maintenon went immediately to see her, and recalled to her mind the loan of the furniture, and assuring her for the rest of her life of a little pension, the first quarter of which she immediately paid into her hands.

The fame of her benevolence spread far and wide. The unfortunate came to her from all sides, as to an asylum from distress, and the low and the high alike had the same access. At the same time, might be seen entering into her closet, the pompous cardinal and the poor miserable capuchin, the ministerial aspirant, and the supplicant for daily bread.

One day a man who had squeezed through the

crowd appeared before her, and accosted her with equal respect and boldness.

"It is, Madam," said he, "forty years since I have seen you, and you may not remember me personally, though I am not perhaps entirely forgotten. I will endeavour to recall to your mind a fact, which I am sure you will not blush to listen to. At your return from America, you came to the gates of the Jesuits of Rochelle every Thursday, when according to the custom of most convents, soup is distributed to the poor. On one of these occasions I observed you in the crowd of mendicants, and was struck with the nobleness of your countenance. To me you did not appear to be formed for such a situation, for you were much embarrassed, and I could not but pity you—"

"It was you then," interrupted Madame de Maintenon, "who to spare my mortification caused the soup to be taken home for me, and expressed a thousand regrets, at being limited to so small a succour? You doubly saved my life in giving me that nourishment, and in compassionating my feelings in being obliged to ask it publicly."

Having taken him privately aside, the old man informed her, that soon after the circumstance alluded to, he left the Jesuits, and had since been master of a village school, but was unfortunate. That his highest ambition was to procure a curacy —and hearing of her generous character, he hoped to obtain it through her protection, perhaps from her gratitude. She thanked him for his confidence, but told him that she did not interfere in the disposal of benefices. She begged his acceptance, however, of

a purse containing a hundred pistoles, at the same time assuring him that he should yearly receive the same small sum. "I wish I could do more," added she, "but I have many relations to provide for. You are not the only one who took pity on my infancy." At this moment Louis entered the apartment they were in. "Sire," said she, "this is my foster father, you will no longer be surprised that I importune you for orphans—"

Let us not, however, consider the life of this good and celebrated woman as an idle tale, to be read and be immediately cast aside, but by a careful study of those good and virtuous principles which guided every action, and which, be it remembered, are applicable to all times and situations, endeavour to profit by the valuable example she has afforded us. In the period of youth, when distinguished only by the dangerous attribute of beauty, she was reduced to a state of indigence, known but by few of the poorest classes. In more advanced life she was gradually raised to honours rarely attained by the rich. But virtuous alike in all, and equally steadfast throughout the whole course of her chequered career, she was poor and dependant, without meanness, dutiful, kind, and patient, without subserviency. Truth and fidelity were her constant guides, and her piety was devoid of ostentation. Her days of prosperity were marked by feeling for the unhappy, and the warmest gratitude to her former protectors. Every deed in every station gives an opportunity for the exercise of some one of these virtues. May we not, therefore, conclude by saying, "Go, reader, and do thou likewise."

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Well might we be accused of negligence, were we to omit in a work of this kind the life of that Queen, whose reign has justly been lauded as England's golden era, and whose happy and glorious career furnishes the brightest page of her country's history.

Elizabeth, the second daughter of Henry the Eighth and Anna Boleyn, was born at the royal palace of Greenwich, in the year 1533, where she was shortly afterwards christened with great pomp and magnificence, Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, standing godfather to the Princess.

Elizabeth had entered on her second year, when her marriage with the Duke D'Angoulême was proposed, in a treaty between France and England; but owing to a different turn in political events, this treaty was annulled shortly after. When yet but three years of age, Elizabeth had the irreparable misfortune to lose her mother. A greater loss can scarcely be conceived to befall any child, but above all a female, than this; yet, was it still farther heightened by the melancholy truth, that the death of her mother was caused by her father! Nevertheless, to this sad privation, and the early habit of deep

thought, careful musing and pensive reflection which it engendered, acting on a bold and vigorous temperament, may be traced the germs of those masculine and independent features in her character which the course of events in after years so strongly developed.

By the divorce and death of her mother she was not only deprived of her honours and of the title of Princess of Wales, but if we may credit a letter from her governess, Lady Bryan, to Lord Cromwell, she seems to have been so far neglected as to have lacked even the necessaries of existence. All these hardships and privations to which her early life was exposed, no doubt combined with the horrid scenes of religious persecution and political butchery witnessed in her sister's reign, to fit her for the arduous duties fate had assigned her on the throne.

Elizabeth was still pursuing her studies at Hertford, when the death of her father called her brother Edward to the crown in 1547. His loss does not appear to have caused her any great regret, and perhaps was well compensated by the milder sway of her brother. Time advanced, and in 1551 another marriage was projected for Elizabeth, with the Prince of Denmark; but this also, from some unknown cause, was relinquished. This Princess early found herself living in such uncertain and dangerous times, as obliged her to use great caution and prudence both in word and deed, and she seems to have made it a constant study to draw useful lessons from all that passed around her. She cultivated learning assiduously, and her preceptor, Roger Ascham, justly gloried in the proficiency of his pupil. Under him she attained very considerable

knowledge of Latin and Greek, the last she spoke moderately well, the former with fluency and propriety; and also acquired French and Italian, as well as her native language. Her handwriting was extremely elegant—an accomplishment very unusual in those days. She was also very skilful in music as it was then known, and extremely fond of reading works calculated to improve the mind.

Her proficiency in the Latin language was often tried, and is evinced by the answer she gave to Philip II., and by her speech to the University of Oxford, when near the age of sixty. She appears likewise to have had some skill in poetry, and some specimens of her English verses have been preserved in Pattenham's Art of English Poesy, a book that has since become very scarce. Of her genius and prompt decision of character, Mr. Walpole has preserved an instance, in an extemporary answer to the insolent admonition delivered to her by the ambassador of Philip II.

"Te veto, ne pergas bello defendere Belgas;
Quæ draçus eripuit, nunc restituantur oportet;
Quas pater evertit, jubeo te condere cellas;
Religio Papæ fac restituatur ad unguem."

When it was delivered, she instantly replied with great spirit,—

"Ad Græcas, bone Rex, fient mandata kalendas."

Many works in English, French, Latin, and Greek, with speeches to her parliament, and letters on various occasions to different persons by Elizabeth, are still preserved.

In the month of January, 1553, her brother Ed-

ward was seized with a distemper which baffled all the skill of his physicians, and day by day increased upon him. In this state of bodily infirmity, with a full consciousness of his approaching dissolution, the political and religious prospects of his country weighed heavily on his mind, for he felt assured that the first object of his sister Mary, would be the re-establishment of Popery; and this he well knew could not now be accomplished without strenuous resistance from the people. The contemplation of such a struggle excited great concern and uneasiness in him; so much so, indeed, that he expressed a desire to exclude Mary if possible from the succession. The Duke of Northumberland turned these thoughts to account, and endeavoured successfully to avail himself of them to improve his position, and push his own ambitious views as far as possible, even to make the crown itself an object of endeavour. With such a purpose, therefore, stimulating him on his course, he took occasion to strengthen the King's dissatisfaction with his father's arrangement of the succession to the crown; representing Mary's fanaticism and firm adherence to her religion in the strongest point of view, at the same time artfully insinuating, that it would be impossible to get rid of her claim without invalidating Elizabeth's title also, Henry having procured an act of Parliament, declaring both illegitimate, but which act had been afterwards repealed, and their rights acknowledged by his last will. By this latter instrument the heir next after that King's own children, was the Duchess of Suffolk, mother of Lady Jane Grey, whom Northumberland had secured to his interests by negotiating

several advantageous marriages for her daughters and other acts of favour. From this lady he procured a resignation of all her claims and pretensions in favour of her eldest daughter, Lady Jane, then lately married to Lord Guildford Dudley, Northumberland's fourth son. He well knew that Edward entertained the highest opinion of her abilities, and was, moreover, predisposed towards her, from having long entertained a deep regard for her person. The proposal being once made, Northumberland ceased not agitating the King's mind until he had induced him to nominate Lady Jane Grey heiress to the crown, which after much difficulty and opposition from the judges and council was accomplished, and in an act to that effect executed a few days previous to Edward's decease. Every thing being thus in train, he next purposed to get possession of the two princesses, and in order to decoy them into the net, a letter was written by the council, under his orders, inviting them to attend their brother in his illness, and they were already far advanced on their journey to the court, when private news of his death, and of Northumberland's designs met them, upon which they instantly turned back, and sought refuge from the threatened danger. Mary hastened to Framlingham Castle to concert measures for contesting the Sovereignty, which after a bloodless effort to retain it for Lady Jane Grey by Northumberland fell into her hands on the 19th of July, 1553.

Towards the close of October in the same year, Mary procured the repeal of the act, which authorized the divorce of her mother Catherine, of Arragon, thus again declaring Elizabeth illegitimate,

and the latter soon found the tone of Queen Mary different to that which she had expected from a sister. From what cause this proceeded it is difficult to say; but it is generally attributed to the jealousy with which Mary viewed the preference the Earl of Devonshire gave to her sister. However that may be, her whole conduct while in power was one of unmitigated suspicion and distrust towards Elizabeth, as her acts too evidently show.

Thus, as Elizabeth advanced in life her trials and difficulties seemed to increase more and more, and once or twice during her youth, threatened even to overwhelm her. As we have said she became an object of personal aversion and of the most deadly political jealousy to her sister Mary, who saw that her merit, accomplishments, and insinuating manners, attracted the respect and admiration of all the young nobility, as well as the universal favour and attention of the nation. Nor must we forget to add to her other offences the firm adherence she manifested to the reformed creed, which completely filled up the measure of her crimes in the eyes of the cruel and bigoted Queen.

Elizabeth, whose spirit could ill brook unmerited slights in public, resolved as the safest and most dignified course open to her, to retire at once to her house in Buckinghamshire. For this purpose, however, she was obliged to solicit leave of absence from the court, which was only granted on condition that she should take with her two gentlemen, as spies upon her conduct, under the designation of officers of her household, which she consented to do and left the court.

About this time the English nation were troubled

at the prospect of their Queen's marriage with Philip of Spain, by which they feared to be subject to the sway of a detested monarch, and a court whose bigotry, rapacity, and cruelty were unexampled. To prevent this catastrophe, several insurrections broke out in different parts of the country, and Elizabeth was regarded with extreme suspicion by the government as in some way concerned. It was known that she was the principal hope of the Protestant party—a party numerous and full of zeal, which the Queen, to secure her own safety, appeared to consider must be crushed. Policy appeared, therefore, to sanction the measure of securing Elizabeth's person, and Mary wrote to her in a high strain of hypocrisy, beginning with "Right dear and entirely beloved sister." In this letter she was requested to come to London for safety and protection, and Mary feigned great apprehensions lest she should be in peril from the tumults. When it reached her, Elizabeth was luckily confined to her bed by sickness, of which circumstance a formal statement was sent to the Privy Council. This disappointed them for a season, but another expedient was soon devised to accomplish their object, and, on one of the insurgents having failed in an attempt upon the Palace at Westminster, and surrendered himself to an officer in the Queen's service, he was ordered to be conveyed to the Tower, where a report was got up and circulated by the Queen's party, that he had named among his accomplices the Princess Elizabeth. Thereupon three gentlemen were sent, attended by a troop of horse, with peremptory orders to bring her back with them to London.

They reached her abode at ten o'clock on the same night, and bursting abruptly into her sick chamber informed her of their errand. Though terrified and disturbed at their appearance, she declared her willingness to accompany them and meet her enemies, but at the same time protesting warmly her loyalty to the Queen her sister, and appealing to their own observation to bear testimony to the reality of her illness and the unfit state in which she was to quit her chamber at present.

The messengers pleaded the urgency of their commission, informing her that they had brought the Queen's litter for her conveyance, and on the physician's opinion being given that her life would not be endangered thereby, she commenced her journey the next morning.

Elizabeth's departure was attended by the tears and lamentations of her whole household, who naturally anticipated the worst results, and so serious was her illness, increased as it was by terror and dejection, that her stern conductors were obliged to allow her four nights' rest in a journey of twenty-nine miles. Her spirits were somewhat revived, however, by the numbers who met her and expressed their deep sympathy and heartfelt condolence, surrounding her litter, and attending her on the road weeping and bewailing her fate. In this manner she came to London, passing through the Queen's Garden to the court. Her enemies seeing her popularity, and fearing that evil consequences might result to themselves from too harsh a course, forbore committing her to the Tower, and contented themselves with detaining her at Whitehall in custody. Here she was examined strictly by

the Privy Council touching the insurgents, but she steadfastly protested her innocence and utter ignorance of their measures or design, and her enemies being unable to substantiate any charge against her, she was in a short time dismissed to her house.

Her troubles were but in their commencement, however, for one of her officers was shortly after this apprehended as an adherent of Wyat, and that leader himself was again rumoured to have accused the Princess of a participation in his plot. On those pretences she was once more taken into custody and conveyed to Hampton Court.

Here it was with strong expressions of concern, announced to her by the Council, that her committal to the Tower had been determined upon by her Majesty, and the next day the Earl of Sussex was sent to inform her that a barge was in readiness to convey her thither immediately. She entreated permission, however, to write to the Queen, and Sussex undertook to be the bearer of her letter. In this communication she repeated her protestations of innocence and loyalty in the strongest manner, but it failed in procuring what she desired; namely, an interview with her sister: on the next day, being Palm Sunday, she was privately removed to the Tower attended by Sussex and another lord, a few female attendants, and some of her officers. For some time she refused to land at Traitor's Gate, but as she set her foot on the ill-omened stairs, she exclaimed, "Here landeth as true a subject, being a prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs, and before thee, Oh God! I can speak it, having no other friend but thee alone!"

Going farther in, she sat down on a stone to rest,

saying when urged to come out of the cold and wet, "Better sitting here than in a worse place, for God knoweth whither you bring me." Her gentleman usher wept, and after a time she entered the prison. The gloomy doors foreboding every danger were locked upon her, but she devoutly turned to God, praying that she might "build her house upon the rock."

Sussex impressed all concerned in keeping her in safe custody, with the necessity of treating their late master's daughter in a manner which they might be able to justify thereafter, to which a cordial assent was given, and the two lords departed. For three months Elizabeth was kept in the Tower which was thronged with state prisoners. But in the mean time Wyat, after several examinations touching the guilt of others, was brought to his death, and confounded all Elizabeth's enemies, by publicly and solemnly asserting her entire innocence of any share whatever in his designs.

Many endeavours were made notwithstanding this, to keep up the opinion that the Princess was implicated in the late disturbances, since on this plea only could she be detained a close prisoner in the Tower, which was necessary while the axe was being laid to the root of her rights and privileges.

Gardiner, her most inveterate enemy and a devoted partisan of Spain, was now prime minister, and in this character he brought before Parliament a bill for excluding Elizabeth from the throne of England; but it was indignantly rejected by a great majority. The prudence of the Princess had hitherto protected her life, and the independent spirit of

the House of Commons now guarantied her succession. Nevertheless one resource remained to Gardiner and his faction, in order at once to free themselves from her presence, and to loosen her hold upon the affections of the people, and it was determined to provide for her a sort of honourable banishment. To make this acceptable, her detention in the Tower had been rendered as irksome as possible, so that after some weeks the close confinement to which she had been subjected of late, affected her health severely, and it was with much difficulty that she obtained permission to walk in the royal apartments under the eye of the constable of the Tower, the lord chamberlain, and three of the Queen's women, the windows at the same time being shut lest she should look out of them. She was afterwards permitted, as a particular favour, to take the air in a small garden with doors and gates carefully closed; but a boy of five years of age belonging to an inferior officer of the Tower, who was wont to visit and bring her flowers, was suspected of being employed as a messenger, and questioned by the lord chamberlain, who in spite of the innocent answers he received, ordered him no more to cheer the prison of Elizabeth. The next day the poor little fellow peeped through the hole of the door as she walked, and affectingly cried out, "Mistress, I can bring you no more flowers!"

By Mary's directions, mass was ordered to be said every morning in Elizabeth's apartment. To this she showed no repugnance, which conduct deprived the Queen of an excuse for religious persecution. Every pretext being exhausted, her detention in the Tower could not much longer be per-

sisted in without danger; but yet to furnish a head to the Protestant party, rendered desperate by the cruelties of Mary, was highly impolitic, and her enemies' schemes were not sufficiently ripened for getting her out of the country. A secondary measure, often adopted in that age, was therefore agreed upon, and she was committed in trust to two gentlemen who were made responsible for her safe keeping, either in their own houses, or in some one of the royal seats.

One of these, Sir Henry Beddingfield, entered the Tower with one hundred men, and Elizabeth, totally ignorant of his purpose, and struck with the unexpected sight, anxiously asked if Lady Jane Grey's scaffold was removed. She was answered in the affirmative, but a rumour reached her that she was to be taken away, though none could inform her whither. Upon this she sent for Lord Chandos, constable of the tower, who had at his own hazard softened as much as possible the hardships of her situation, and he confirmed the report, but told her there was no possibility of avoiding the orders, to consign to Beddingfield, who was to carry her, he believed, to Woodstock. In answer to all her inquiries she could get no information respecting him; no one could tell any thing of his character, which rendered her very apprehensive. She asked if his orders were to murder her secretly, and if they thought his conscience would permit him to do so; but nobody could give her satisfactory intelligence, for he was a perfect stranger to all. In his custody then she quitted the Tower, and found herself at night at Richmond Palace, where Mary held her court; but she was a captive, and

so terrified with the harsh and insolent manners of Beddingfield and the appearances around her, that she felt firmly persuaded they intended that night to be her last.

While buried in these melancholy forebodings, and deeply absorbed in sad reflections, an offer of immediate liberty was made to her on condition that she would accept the hand of the Duke of Savoy.

To many a young Princess in such unhappy circumstances, without friend or counsellor to advise with, a prisoner surrounded by guards, and in hourly dread of an attempt upon her life, this proposal might have appeared fraught with every desirable good, as affording the means of a joyful release and comfortable provision. But Elizabeth looked deeper than the surface, she saw that her banishment was thereby intended, and the exchange of the throne of England for the matrimonial coronet of a foreign dukedom. She therefore unhesitatingly gave the offer a decided denial, and at once resolved to brave all the malice of her enemies. Upon her refusal being reported she was ordered to be removed to Ricot, the seat of Lord Williams, in Oxfordshire, and on their journey she saw some of her poor servants who had been taken from her during her imprisonment, when she desired one of her men to say these expressive words to them from her, "Like a sheep to the slaughter."

During her journey her heart was cheered by the cordial and spontaneous rejoicings of the populace for her liberty, which Beddingfield soon repressed by the severities which he showed to his

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unfortunate captive. Elizabeth being generously treated by Lord Williams at Ricot, it was thought necessary to remove her to Woodstock, where under the harsh inspection of Beddingfield, she found herself a close prisoner as she had been in the Tower, with a military guard again keeping watch over her night and day.

Anxious thoughts and rigid confinement robbed her youth of health and every pleasure, and she is said on one occasion at Woodstock to have envied a milk-maid, whom she heard singing freely in a neighbouring field, feelingly contrasting the mirth and ease displayed in the humble strain with her own misfortunes and unhappy restraint. In short, her life was imbittered with persecution, and she felt that her best days were rolling away in one dull and monotonous stream of torpid misery. Physicians were sent from court to prescribe for her, and on their return made a most favourable report to the Queen of her dutiful humility. But the Bishops were her enemies, and rendered all efforts for her liberation nugatory for a time.

In July, 1554, the marriage of Mary with Philip of Spain took place, when the reign of popery and terror commenced. The ancient statutes against heretics were revived, and Gardiner and Bonner glutted their vengeance upon Protestants of all ranks and descriptions. With such bloodthirsty servants, Philip found it quite unnecessary to apply the aid of civil to the ecclesiastical authority; indeed he seems to have shrunk from the odium of the cruelties they committed, and either wishing to gain popularity, or for some other motive chose rather to commence his reign with mildness than

rigour. He was the ostensible cause of the release of many prisoners, confined for the usurpation of Jane Grey and insurrection of Wyat, and by his influence also the Princess Elizabeth and the Earl of Devonshire were set at liberty. Various cogent political reasons have been advanced to explain this part of his conduct, and are sufficiently weighty to have occasioned this stretch of clemency independent of all humane motives. Be this as it may, after being taken to Hampton Court and strongly pressed to confess her guilt which she as strongly denied, her freedom was granted at his earnest intercession.

After this period Elizabeth was allowed to amuse herself as before her incarceration, but with spies narrowly watching and reporting every action of her life, occasionally aided by ecclesiastics in search of the germs of heresy. Her reported answer to a commission of this nature, sent to ascertain her opinion on the dangerous question of the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, is too characteristic of her usual prudence and natural good sense to be omitted here. It was, we are told, as follows:—

> "Christ was the word that spake it;
> He took the bread and brake it;
> And what the word did make it
> That I believe and take it."

Thus passed her life till towards the close of Mary's reign. When the Queen found health failing and death visibly approaching, she felt the same interest for the stability of the Romish creed as her brother Edward had done for the reformed faith; and indeed was similarly circumstanced with re-

gard to the succession. Although Elizabeth had not dared to avow as much, Mary had too many reasons to believe that she was sincerely attached to the reformed creed; and was often prompted by the priestly counsellors about her to sacrifice the heretical Princess to her own religious zeal. "It is useless lopping the branches, if you are to let the tree stand," was the argument of one of the Princess's most bitter enemies; and it is highly probable that they would have succeeded had not Philip strongly urged an opposite course. To this in all probability he was strongly instigated by the hopes he entertained of espousing her himself in case of Mary's death; and thus make one more effort to unite England to the crown of Spain. The Dauphin had lately married the Princess Mary of Scotland, and had thus strengthened, it was presumed, an interest adverse to Elizabeth's pretensions to the crown; for it was very uncertain at this period what course would be taken by the Queen of England with regard to it, though her designs were universally suspected of being hostile to Elizabeth.

Mary, however, died ere any measures inimical to Elizabeth's claims had been arranged by the Catholics, on the 17th of November, 1558, in the forty-fourth year of her age; and two days after, Elizabeth set out from Hatfield to London to take possession of the crown.

The accession of Elizabeth to the crown of England caused universal joy throughout the land. Indeed so great was her popularity, from the prudence she had displayed during her sister's reign, the imminent dangers she had been exposed to, and the fortitude with which she had borne her sufferings,

that all men felt compassion for her situation and concern for her safety; and when upon Mary's death she was placed upon the throne, the enthusiastic welcome given to the proclamation of Elizabeth demonstrated her great and general favour with the nation.

It is true, that no doubt was entertained of the difference of her religious principles from those of the party which were still in power. Yet the dismay with which men of every different sect viewed the reign just closed, and the fears which it had engendered, taught them to bury, at least for a time, all theological differences, and join in greeting Elizabeth as their Queen, with unfeigned satisfaction and general rejoicing. When the death of Mary was announced in Parliament, scarcely an expression of regret was manifested, but on all sides burst forth, "God save Queen Elizabeth! Long and happily may she reign!" And the people likewise, expressed their satisfaction, on her proclamation, by hearty and long continued cheers. Thus, after so many threatenings of danger was this glorious and happy reign ushered in by a harmony and unanimity of feeling seldom equalled, and certainly never surpassed.

As we have before stated, Elizabeth received the news of her own accession at Hatfield, where she was at the time residing. She neither affected concern, nor exultation at it, but falling on her knees, uttered this verse of the Psalms, "*A domino factum est istud, et est mirabile oculis nostris,*" "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." These words are to this day on the stamp of her

gold; and on her silver the following, "I have chosen God for my helper."

A privy council was immediately held at Hatfield, and the choice she then made of her servants, gave a happy presage of her future government, according well with the wishes of her people, and affording the best proof of her judgment and discrimination.

The judicious and generous traits of Elizabeth's character, soon began to display themselves. With equal prudence and magnanimity, she buried in oblivion all the injuries and offences she had endured during the rule of her father and sister, and received even her most malevolent enemies with courtesy and affability. Nevertheless she showed at the same time, that she could and would discriminate between private oppressors and public offenders; for when the bishops came in a body to make their obeisance to her, she expressed sentiments of regard to each of them, except Bonner, from whom she turned with abhorrence as from a man polluted with blood, and an obnoxious object to every heart susceptible of humanity.

She forgot not services, however, as she did injuries, but promoted and liberally rewarded those who had befriended her, when unable to defend herself, and honoured those who had supported her cause in its day of adversity. A benevolent spirit of charity prevailed at court from the very commencement of her reign, which tended much to fix and retain that popular veneration and esteem with which she had been hailed, on her accession. She was much gratified in her journey to London, with the enthusiasm manifested, meeting continually im-

mense crowds of people, amongst whom but one feeling of emulation seemed to exist, namely, who should give her the strongest testimony of their attachment.

On her entrance into the Tower, the great change that had taken place in her circumstances since she last visited it forcibly and solemnly impressed her mind, and she fell on her knees to return thanks to the Almighty, who had granted her deliverance from so many bloody persecutors—a deliverance, she asserted, no less miraculous than that which Daniel had received from the den of lions. This pious act of gratitude to Heaven, seemed to close her remembrance of all past hardships and injuries; nor did those who had treated her with severity ever suffer retributive resentment during the whole course of her reign, notwithstanding the many plots against her life and throne, which were framed by their party, and the urgent entreaties of the parliaments and people to a more rigorous exercise of her authority.

At the privy council held at Hatfield, Sir William Cecil, who had long maintained with her an intimate and secret correspondence during her adversity, and had assisted her much with his salutary counsels, had been appointed secretary of state by the Queen. His private character was most exemplary, and on appointing him a member of the counell she addressed these gracious words to him, "This judgment I have of you, that you will not be corrupted with any gift; and that you will be faithful to the state; and that, without respect to my

private will, you will give that counsel, you think best."

With this faithful servant she constantly consulted, placing much reliance on his probity and judgment. After having given a few days to the arrangement of her domestic affairs, she apprized the foreign courts of Mary's death and her own accession, and by a judicious and conciliatory line of conduct avoided giving offence to any, while at the same time she followed the policy which appeared most conducive to the interests of her kingdom.

Not to alarm the partisans of the Catholic religion, Elizabeth had retained thirteen of her sister's counsellors, but in some degree to balance their authority she had added eight who were inclined to the Protestant communion, needing some support in her projected measures. The restoration of the Protestant formula was the subject of frequent deliberations with Cecil, and placed as Elizabeth was, in the midst of a strong adverse party at home, supported by powerful auxiliaries abroad, it was a subject that required the greatest caution and circumspection from a sovereign so recently placed on the throne, although it was one to which by interest, education, and a sincere affection, she was strongly attached. The means of executing that great enterprise then required her best consideration, more especially as she was resolved not to permit the bigots of her own party to make a violent and sudden inroad upon the established religion as Mary had done; but to proceed by safe and gradual steps, showing her intentions of encouraging Protestantism, yet endeavouring by a mild and concili-

atory course to fix it in the hearts of the people, and rather win over their enemies than extirpate them. For this purpose she first strengthened her party by recalling all the exiles who had been banished, and gave liberty to all the prisoners who were confined on account of their faith; and afterwards exerted her power in acts favouring the reformers which were immediately within the grasp of her royal prerogative. She prohibited all preaching without a special license, but dispensed with this order in favour of some of her own sect who were extremely moderate in their opinions. She then suspended the existing laws so as to allow great part of the service and the Gospels to be read in English, and having ordered that other churches should follow the example of her own chapel, she made alterations, each of which, though seemingly trifling, added to what was already gained, and eventually led to the most material results.

The Bishops saw early significant signs of a revolution in the church, and although several had hitherto turned with every shift and change, yet they now thought themselves sufficiently powerful to check the proceedings of a Princess whose firmness they much miscalculated. They therefore refused to officiate at her coronation; but their purpose was defeated, as the Bishop of Carlisle was after much entreaty prevailed upon to perform the ceremony, which was celebrated with great pomp and splendour. Returning through London amidst the enthusiastic acclamations of her subjects, a boy personating Truth presented her with a copy of the Bible from one of the triumphal arches erected in

honour of the occasion. She received the book in the most gracious manner, and placing it next her bosom, declared that amidst all the costly testimonies that the city had that day given her of their attachment, this present was by far the most precious and acceptable. Elizabeth possessed in the highest degree those arts which facilitate the acquisition of popularity, and though similarly brilliant and costly pageants have frequently been displayed upon such occasions, perhaps there never was one where the warmest affections of the heart were so fully reciprocated between the sovereign and the people.

By the good sense and moderation of the Queen a total change in the state religion was effected under many disadvantages during the first Parliament of a new reign, without violence, tumult, or clamour. Large subsidies were likewise granted, and Elizabeth was always treated by the House with the greatest deference and respect. She had now attained the age of twenty-five years, and they thought it their duty in the most respectful terms to request her to fix her choice upon a husband. In reply to this address she gave a number of reasons for preferring a single life, and ended, we are told, by saying that she desired no higher character of her to be transmitted to posterity than this inscription on her tombstone:—

"Here lies Elizabeth, who lived and died a maiden queen."

Elizabeth being sensible that peace was necessary for some years to bring the kingdom again into a flourishing state, entered into a treaty with France

to that end, and united as France and Scotland then were, amity with the Scots followed as a matter of course. Hostilities were also terminated on the continent, and general tranquillity seemed once more to be restored in Europe.

But notwithstanding all outward signs of friendship on the part of France, Elizabeth had great cause to apprehend that the pretensions of the Queen of Scots and her husband the Dauphin, who had with several other hostile indications openly assumed the royal arms of England, might soon involve her in a war with the two neighbouring countries. She therefore instituted military spectacles, and graced them with her presence to encourage and practise the warlike propensities of her subjects. On such occasions her Majesty, surrounded by a splendid court, marked their evolutions and watched their exertions with interest and satisfaction, confirming their loyalty and valour by praises, thanks, and gracious smiles of favour and approbation. She turned also her royal tours and visitations to useful purposes, seizing the opportunities they afforded of gaining an intimate knowledge of her people, and taking with her own hand the petitions of the meanest, nor would she allow any who sought her to be shut out from her presence.

The death of Henry the Second of France took place in the year 1560; he was succeeded by Francis the Second, husband to Mary Queen of Scots, and his preparations now plainly showed Elizabeth that war was inevitable. Her situation was critical, unsupported, and alone opposed to

powerful enemies at home and abroad, her own good management was all she could depend upon, she felt that the greatest circumspection was necessary to meet the impending storm. She therefore endeavoured to avert it from her own country by sending a strong army to the frontiers of Scotland, that being the side whence the danger was chiefly to be apprehended, and entered into a close connexion with the Protestant party in that country who were already in arms against the Queen Regent, who governed Scotland in the absence of Francis and Mary. The expedition was well planned and judiciously executed, and the war terminated in a single campaign by the treaty of Edinburgh.

Soon after this period the death of Francis the Second left the Queen of Scots a widow, when the relations of England with France and Scotland immediately assumed an entirely new aspect.

Though by this event Elizabeth was freed from her apprehensions of a permanent union of Scotland with France, she was yet determined to take advantage of the situation in which it left her dangerous rival the Queen of Scots. Amongst other inducements to this line of policy was her fear that the Catholics, who were now highly excited in favour of Mary, might unite in some effort to establish her in England. The Queen therefore gave orders to her vigilant minister, Throgmorton, to make immediate application to the Scottish Queen for a ratification of the treaty of Edinburgh. But though Mary had desisted from bearing the name and title of Queen of England after the death of

Francis, yet she declined complying with Elizabeth's demand in this momentous matter, as she knew any concession might afterwards be construed into a formal renunciation of her pretensions to the English throne.

Mary wishing again to return to her country applied to Elizabeth for a safe conduct through England, but her request was refused, except on condition of signing the treaty of Edinburgh. This demand and the spirited rejoinder made by the Queen of Scots widened the breach between these rival Princesses. Mary embarked at Calais, and eluding the English fleet, which it was supposed had put to sea to intercept her, arrived safely in Scotland. Although the history of Mary is foreign to our subject, yet we may here be allowed to pause and express our pity of the situation in which she was placed. On her return she found her kingdom in most lamentable disorder, her person surrounded with turbulent and factious nobles, a gloomy, bigoted and divided people, and insolent ecclesiastics, and she soon perceived that her only hope of tranquillity was in establishing a good understanding with her neighbour the Queen of England.

This she endeavoured to do through her secretary, and the answer she received from Elizabeth was prudent and judicious. She disclaimed all knowledge of Mary's title to the crown of England as a thing she had never investigated, but allowed that if it was well founded she possessed every advantage over her rivals. She said that after her (Elizabeth's) death, it was the business of others to examine the claims of Mary, but that she herself was

resolved to live and die Queen of England. She also offered to explain the treaty of Edinburgh, to convince Mary that her exclusion was not meant, and again required its ratification. Upon this Mary agreed to renounce all present pretensions to the crown of England, provided Elizabeth would declare her contingent successor. This, however, the jealousy of the English Queen prevented her assenting to, and no farther concessions were made on either side, though an external show of friendship and reconciliation was still kept up between them.

Elizabeth now plainly perceived that without any interposition of hers the Queen of Scots would be sufficiently depressed and employed by her struggles with her own mutinous subjects to prevent her plotting against England. She, therefore, turned her immediate attention to the regulation of the internal affairs of her own kingdom, and to promoting the comfort of her people. She now paid off part of the crown debts, regulated the coin which had become debased, furnished her arsenals with great quantities of arms, introduced into England the art of making gunpowder and brass cannon, fortified her frontiers on the Scotch side, frequently reviewed her militia, encouraged agriculture by allowing a free exportation of corn, promoted trade and navigation by various means, and so much increased the shipping of her kingdom by building vessels of large burden in the royal dockyards, and suggesting the like undertakings to the merchants, that she was justly styled the restorer of naval glory and the "Queen of the Seas." Her frugality enabled her to

execute all these great enterprises without burdening her subjects with fresh taxes, and she showed to the world the happy results of industry and perseverance, when employed in well concerted projects of general utility.

So great was the renown of Elizabeth, and so far had it now spread, that many proposals of marriage were still made by some of the highest houses in Europe, in the belief and confident expectation that she would not persist in her resolution of continuing single. Protestants and Catholics were alike distinguished in the list of her suitors, and some of her own subjects even ventured to entertain secret hopes of success. But of these Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, a younger son of the Earl of Northumberland, seemed most likely to succeed. His exterior was extremely prepossessing, and he had acquired the art of flattering with great address: so much so, indeed, that notwithstanding the Queen's quick sense and shrewd discrimination he had become a powerful favourite, and greatly influenced her counsels. But so little worthy did he seem of this distinction in the eyes of the world, that Elizabeth's partiality was generally attributed to the blindness of a violent affection rather than to his own merits. One of her Ambassadors, Sir Thomas Chaloner, a man of great wisdom and integrity, when he heard that Robert Dudley, a person he deemed little worthy of notice, and also a married man, was the favourite of the Queen, wrote to Cecil on the subject, and their fears for the reputation of their mistress gave additional urgency to their pleadings, that she should make speedy choice of some

one of her distinguished suitors in marriage. In their efforts they were still frustrated, however, but at the same time that she seemed determined to give no direct successor to the throne herself, she appeared resolved also to name no other, even as contingent heir, doubtless not without reasons, though her motives can now only rest upon conjecture.

A circumstance happened at this time which cooled the ardour of the Parliament for pressing the Queen to make choice of a husband, and awakened some alarm in the nation.

Dudley was persuaded by the scandal of the court that the Queen's partiality to him was beyond the limits of ordinary regard, and her refusal of so many foreign princes seemed to confirm such reports, and to justify a belief that she had bestowed her heart somewhere. At this period, when rumour was busy with her private life and the gossip's tales of confirmation, Lord Robert Dudley lost his wife under circumstances of the most suspicious nature. She had been sent by her husband to a solitary mansion inhabited only by a dependant of the family, and there speedily met with a sudden death. It was given out that she accidentally fell from the stairs, but the most sinister reports were spread abroad, and application was even made to the Secretary of State for an investigation into the circumstances of the case; but no steps are recorded to have taken place, and the favour of Dudley at court seems thenceforth to have suffered no decline.

In the year 1563, the English connexion with Scotland seems to have assumed the appearance of

a cordial friendship, and an interview between Elizabeth and Mary was projected to take place at York, but by some unknown intervention or politic reason it was prevented.

Integrity seems to be considered so useless a quality in princely negotiations, that we seldom find a ray of truth to guide us through the dark and tangled labyrinth of courtly intrigue. Elizabeth, in reply to Mary's solicitations for advice, expressed a strong wish that the Queen of Scots should espouse some English nobleman, to cement more perfectly the union between the two kingdoms; and she offered, upon her compliance with this request, to name a successor to her crown. Shortly after, at the conference at Berwick, she caused Robert Dudley, now Earl of Leicester, to be named as the man on whom she wished Mary's choice to fall; but there were many objections and difficulties to be overcome in accepting this advice; and the sincerity of Elizabeth in the suggestion, appears rather dubious, for all historians agree in stating that he still stood pre-eminent in her favour, and that by her constant and declared attachment to him she had inspired him with hopes of possessing her own hand. The proposal of his marriage with Mary of course was not agreeable to the aspiring Leicester, who suspected that it was the work of his enemy Cecil, to lose him the friendship of Mary for his pretensions, and that of Elizabeth from jealousy of his attachment to another. The state of suspense and indecision into which this advice threw Mary was possibly anticipated by Elizabeth, for it is hardly to be doubted that great dupli-

city, or what in such affairs is called policy, was displayed by the Queen in this business. It, however, served to interrupt the amicable correspondence hitherto kept up between them; and the Queen of Scots, in two years after married Lord Darnley, son of the Earl of Lennox.

In 1566 Mary was delivered of a Prince, which not a little increased the Queen's embarrassments, by exciting the Catholic party at the English court to engage in a plot for the purpose of obliging her to declare the Queen of Scots heir to the English monarchy. It was met and frustrated by the vigilance of the government; but Elizabeth was again urged to marry by her Parliament with an acrimony and vehemence she never before experienced; the leaders of the whole Catholic faction, knowing her fixed resolution against such a course, hoped to be able to draw from her an acknowledgment of Mary's title, which they represented as necessary to the future peace and safety of the realm, in case she refused: and it was only by a display of consummate prudence and wisdom, that she was able to elude the application. Mary's behaviour at the same time was so moderate towards the Protestants and so gracious to all men, that she caused the number of her friends to multiply daily in England, till the court of Elizabeth was full of them; but she soon after lost by her own vicious conduct the many advantages she had gained, and fell from the height of her prosperity into infamy and irretrievable ruin.

Early in 1567 Darnley was assassinated by or at the instigation of the Earl of Bothwell, who was at the time in high favour with Mary, and afterwards

espoused her, so that little doubt could be entertained that she was accessary to the murder. Dearly, however, did she pay for her guilt, being immediately afterwards involved in the factious contentions for power of her own nobility, which rent Scotland from end to end, and at last placed her at the mercy of Elizabeth.

Discord reigned triumphant in Scotland after Darnley's death, and Elizabeth's fears and jealousies being now laid asleep by the complete ruin in which Mary had involved herself, she seemed to be touched with compassion for her helpless situation, and to reflect on the instability of human affairs and the danger of encouraging rebellious subjects, till she had resolved to employ her authority for that Princess's relief. For this purpose, therefore, she sent Throgmorton as her Ambassador to Scotland, to remonstrate both with the Queen and the associated Lords. His instructions were full of good sense, and of that feeling of generosity which the peculiarities of the occasion required, mingling much solid instruction with persuasive arguments for all parties to amicably adjust their differences.

She required the malcontents to restore their Queen to liberty, promising in return to concur with them in all proper expedients for regulating the government, punishing the King's murderers, and guarding the life and liberty of the infant Prince; but the English Ambassador was denied access to Mary, who had by the time of his arrival been confined in the Castle of Lochleven. After much persecution, the Queen escaped from the hands of her jailors, and Elizabeth was no sooner informed of her flight,

than she declared her resolution of supporting the unhappy fugitive, and offered her the assistance of troops and good officers; but all was of no avail, the various defeats her arms sustained soon forced Mary to fly to England, and to crave the protection she had been promised by Elizabeth.

So far this Princess might have been guided by humane feelings alone, but we are told that her Minister Cecil represented with much force the dangers that might arise to the Protestants of England and Scotland, and to her own crown, should Mary again put herself into the hands of her French allies; that with them, other foreign powers might join and support the Catholics of the two countries; and that although it was glorious to protect innocence, it was infamous to patronise and support vice and murder on the throne. And in conclusion he stated, that if the crimes of the Scottish Princess should appear as great as they were believed to be, every measure against her would be justified; if innocent, as some supposed, every exertion in her favour would be laudable and glorious. Following this advice Elizabeth determined not to see her till she could clear her character from the imputation of her husband's murder, and notified this resolution to her, softened with condolence on her many misfortunes.

The Queen of Scots, whom the Ambassador found at Carlisle Castle, received this check with tears, and necessity drew from her a declaration of willingness to submit her cause to the arbitration of so good a friend. This was the very point Elizabeth was striving for, and she immediately sent into Scotland

a despatch by Middlemore, desiring the Regent to desist from farther prosecution of the Queen's party, and to send some person to London to justify his conduct. Murray, though startled at the message, thought it better to digest the affront than to provoke the Queen at such a time by a refusal. He replied, that he would himself with commissioners, take the journey and submit his cause to her Majesty, who thus became sole arbitress in the affairs of Scotland. Much opposition, however, was manifested to this arrangement from Mary and her friends, when they found Murray had yielded his assent, which was at last overcome by the plausible professions of the English Queen. Mary was removed from prison to prison, well guarded and vigilantly watched, though ostensibly she seemed only to change her dwelling accompanied by her attendants. It was undoubtedly no slight joy for Elizabeth thus to see the fate of a neighbouring kingdom, which had during many centuries been a thorn in the side of England, and the destiny of so dangerous a rival, now placed entirely at her disposal. Nor did she fail to take advantage of such a state of things to promote her own views. She was well aware, that if Mary proved guilty, she might detain her in England; and if innocent, restore her to her throne, under such limitations as would place in her hands a perpetual arbitration in Scotch affairs, and she should thereby secure her kingdom in its most vulnerable point.

Thus stood affairs till the commissioners met at York, in 1568. Ere the conference commenced, however, endeavours were made by the Duke of

Norfolk, who had been placed at the head of the English commission by Elizabeth, but who secretly entertained a design of shielding Mary, and if possible securing her acquittal in the hopes of marrying her himself, to gain Murray's silence by bribery and other means, which were not altogether without their effect, but which were afterwards frustrated by Cecil and the Council.

The matter was long in discussion. Elizabeth found her detention of the Queen of Scots attended with bad consequences, so strongly was every one who approached her charmed by her demeanour, and the Regent Murray refused to impeach his Queen unless Elizabeth would give him a promise in writing to support the young King's party in Scotland, in case Mary should be found guilty. This condition was evaded by the Queen of England; yet the danger of releasing her was evident, and both sovereigns endeavoured mutually to deceive each other.

Elizabeth discovered Norfolk's treachery, and broke the bond of agreement between him and Murray. She called the conference to London, and succeeded in getting into her possession the proofs of Mary's guilt brought thither by the Regent and his companions, but deferred proceeding farther in the affair, upon Mary's revocation of the powers she had given her Commissioners. Elizabeth then dismissed Murray to Scotland, where his presence was by this time required to check the intrigues of the Queen's party.

In the following year Scotland was once more thrown into confusion by the assassination of the

Regent, and Elizabeth, to check the progress of faction, despatched Suffolk with an army to the Northern borders under other pretences. No words can convey an adequate idea of the ferment into which the various and disguised interests of faction at this time plunged that devoted country; but they are foreign to our subject, and we must now return to the more immediate transactions of the reign of Elizabeth. In 1570, the Pope, Pius the Fifth, after having vainly endeavoured to conciliate the Queen of England, published a bull of excommunication against her, invalidating her title to the crown and absolving her subjects from their allegiance. The rage of the Pope aroused the Protestant party to a vigilant support of the Queen, and made her still more considered as the head of that body. In the Parliament, which was then called after a recess of five years, the various points of the Queen's authority as supreme head of the Church were so jealously watched over by her, that she would not allow it to take these matters into consideration. Many popular questions, however, were touched upon, which the Queen did not approve, and amongst them she was highly displeased with Stricland's presumption in moving a reform in the Liturgy, and even protested against his resuming his duties. Finding that the conduct of the members had raised a great ferment, the Speaker moved that the House should surcease all farther proceedings, and thus her honour was saved by its silence; and lest the question might be resumed, she sent Stricland next day permission to give his attendance as usual. A great deal of dis-

cussion afterwards took place, and parties were violent, but receiving a severe check, and dreading the displeasure of the Queen, they were extremely submissive; nevertheless at the conclusion of the session, she thought it incumbent to show her displeasure at these feeble efforts of liberty, and to let them know that she considered the affairs of the State and of the Church entirely under the control of their ruler.

Though Elizabeth's influence over her Parliament and people was uncontrolled and undisputed, yet she was kept in great anxiety, and felt her throne tremble beneath her as she perceived that England was impregnated with the same seeds of discord as other countries. The difference of religious opinions, the fierce animosity of the sectaries, and the dangerous struggles in which France was now engaged with all the unnatural fury of a civil war, amidst which Elizabeth's enemies, the Guises, were rising to unrivalled fame and grandeur, filled her with alarm. To oppose their power, she secretly sent assistance to the Protestants, employed her authority with the German princes to obtain their aid, and advanced money to the Queen of Navarre, for which she received jewels as pledges. A regiment of one hundred gentlemen was likewise permitted to go over to France, amongst whom was the famous Sir Walter Raleigh, then a young man. They were met, however, more by policy than force, and among many artifices resorted to to lull the Protestants into a fatal security, Charles affected to enter into a close connexion with Elizabeth; and the apparent favour with which he now treated the

Huguenots inclined her to think him sincere in preferring her friendship to that of Mary Queen of Scots. The better to mask his real designs and deceive the Queen, proposals were made for her marriage with the Duke of Anjou, a young prince with personal attractions and high reputation to recommend him; and the letters which passed between Walsingham, the Ambassador at the Court of France, and Cecil, now Lord Burleigh, depict the strongest desire in the royal family of France for the alliance. A genuine memoir of the Duke of Anjou is still extant, written by a person of the first distinction at the Court of France; it was given to Walsingham and sent by him to Lord Burleigh for Queen Elizabeth's inspection, and the following passages are extracted from its pages:

"I write nothing, my Lord, but what is correct, and what could be confirmed were it needful, by all those of the highest honour at court, of both religions. In a matter of this importance I should be unworthy of the confidence you place in me, if I did not state things exactly as they are. No Prince for many years has been born with such fine and great inclinations as ours. To the best qualities of the heart and mind he adds a handsome person, the germs of such virtues as seem to promise a future Alexander. He tempers the majesty of the Prince with the affability of the gentleman, and makes himself both loved and respected. Of his battles I will not speak, you are aware of his valour. You wish to know his opinion in respect to marriage and religion. In regard to the last, you know that the

most clear-sighted cannot see into their own hearts, far less into those of others, and that *this* secret God reserves for himself. I will, however, tell you frankly, that knowing as I do the age and the court, religion may be *desired* in the great, but will seldom be found. Are you really so prepossessed by your reformation, as to believe that Princes examine their consciences scrupulously, and that the commandments are as deeply engraven on their hearts as the maxims of policy and the pleasures of the world? If you have the charity to believe this, Protestant as you are, you are a better Christian than I am. You have been given to understand that the Prince may be attracted to the Reformed Religion by ambition or scruples of conscience. Undeceive yourself; he is born a Catholic, has made his public profession, and for that faith fought and conquered. He will live and die in it. As to marriage, he speaks of your Queen in terms of high admiration, and though she is older than himself, he perceives so many beauties in her mind and person, that he often gives her the appellation of the "wonder of the age." If, then, this negotiation succeeds, as the most worthy of both nations desire, great advantages will be the result to both."

The memoir goes on with a very fine description of the Duke's person and abilities, and ends with this eulogy. "It seems to me, that if the Queen, your mistress, is not content with such a Prince, she has only to make a vow of perpetual virginity."

It is evident this negotiation was on both sides kept up for their own political purposes: neither would yield the point of toleration to the religion

of the other, and so the matter ended. But Elizabeth, by the appearance of forming a new alliance, though *but* a shadow, discouraged the partisans of Mary, and fortified herself against the despotic authority established by Philip in the Low Countries; where, in the struggle for the Protestant religion, fifty thousand men were inhumanly put to death in a few months. Indeed, after the arrival of Alva, in 1568, with a powerful body of Spaniards, nothing was heard of but confiscations, imprisonments, exiles, torture, and death.

Elizabeth was naturally displeased to witness the progress of a scheme for the extermination of the Protestants and the erection of a great military power in a state so nearly situated to England; and although a prudent regard for her own interests would not allow her to interfere warmly in their struggle, yet humanity and good policy equally urged her to give protection to the exiled Flemings, who took refuge in her dominions. And to this policy was owing the introduction of many of our most valuable manufactures, which were before that period unpractised and unknown in England.

Though curbed as I have before said by circumstances, and unwilling to hazard open war with Spain, she yet ventured to insult Alva, whose government she foresaw would not long exist, as his authority was not established, and his cruelty excited the Protestants to but the greater resistance. This she did in the following manner: Some Genoese merchants had contracted with Philip to bring into Flanders four hundred thousand crowns, and their vessels being attacked by French privateers,

took shelter in Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Southampton. The commanders asserted that the money belonged to the King of Spain, but the Queen finding it was the property of the merchants, took possession of it as a loan, and deprived the Duke of Alva of his supply, at a time of great necessity.

Alva in revenge seized and confined all the English merchants, and confiscated their effects. Elizabeth retaliated upon the Flemish and Spanish merchants, and gave all the English liberty to make reprisals on Philip's subjects. Thus matters stood till the differences were afterwards made up by treaty, but the loss occasioned by her well-timed but treacherous blow could never be repaired by the Spaniards in the Low Countries.

The great number of discontented Catholics in England, the presence of Alva in Flanders, and the power and number of Mary's adherents, seem to have induced the Duke of Norfolk at this period to forget a promise he had given to Elizabeth when he was released from the Tower, to drop all intercourse with the Queen of Scots. Notwithstanding this engagement, he formed, in conjunction with many others, a very dangerous conspiracy against Elizabeth, designing to force her acceptance of what terms they chose to dictate upon the subject of the succession. The principal object of this plot, however, was to free Mary, as it had already been determined that Norfolk, their leader, was to release and marry the Scottish Queen; and, without doubt, its success would have seriously endangered the Queen of England, and perhaps cost her her throne, and entirely altered the religion and constitution of the

country, had it not been timely discovered, and Norfolk taken, tried, and condemned.

The Queen seems to have compassionated Norfolk extremely, or wished to conciliate by clemency; for she twice signed the warrant for his execution, and twice revoked the fatal sentence, though pressed on each occasion by her ministers to pursue rigorous measures. After four months' hesitation, however, the Parliament addressed her in strong terms for the execution of the Duke, and Norfolk died with calmness and constancy, denying any criminal intentions against the Queen, but acknowledging the justice of the sentence by which he suffered.

The Queen of Scotland was the main cause of these events, but being a sovereign Princess, Elizabeth could not feel justified in proceeding to extremities against her. She sent some noblemen, however, to expostulate with her upon having lent herself to the conspiracy, as well as upon many other articles of offence. In reply Mary either denied the facts, or threw the blame upon others, and the Queen was little satisfied with her disingenuousness, while the Parliament was so enraged that they demanded her immediate trial and execution. Elizabeth, however, was satisfied with showing Mary the sense of the nation, and commanded her Parliament to stir no more in the affair; but at the same time seeing the restless spirit of this Princess, she ordered her confinement to be made more rigorous. She also took strong measures to settle the affairs of Scotland, sending an army which reduced the most refractory, while the rest submitted to the Regent Morton, and thus

secured the blessings of peace for a considerable time.

Far different were the affairs of France at this period, and Elizabeth soon became fully sensible of the dangerous situation in which she was placed. The Huguenots of that country, lulled into a fatal security, had just fallen victims to the deep and bloody designs of their enemies. All the principal Protestants of France had been drawn to Paris to witness the marriage of the King of Navarre with Marguerite de Valois, and were cruelly massacred on the day of St. Bartholomew, 1572. Some authors say the number amounted to six thousand, others speak of ten thousand; but according to either, there were enough to show the King's desire for their universal extirpation. Fenelon, the French Ambassador at the English court, a man of probity, abhorred the treachery and cruelty of his sovereign, and declared that he was now ashamed to bear the name of Frenchman.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew showed clearly to Elizabeth the object of that general combination which existed amongst the Catholics, and she knew that she herself, as the head and protectress of the new religion, was exposed to the utmost fury of an intolerant sect. The cruelties in the Low Countries, the renewed friendship of the perfidious, barbarous, and bigoted Philip II. with Charles IX., showed but too clearly the connecting links of this conspiracy, and she had much reason therefore to dread its efforts. She calmly kept up her commerce with the French Monarch, however, and listened to the

professions of friendship he made her; allowed negotiations to be carried on for her marriage with another of the royal family of France, after those already proposed had been broken off; and showed how far the policy of a Queen can control the feelings of a woman, by sending the Earl of Worcester to assist, in her name, at the baptism of a young Princess lately born to Charles. But at the same time she prepared herself for that attack which seemed to threaten from the combined powers of the Papal Princes, by fortifying Portsmouth, putting the fleet in order, training her militia, and assiduously cultivating popularity with her subjects. She acted with vigour in the affairs of Scotland, and renewed her alliance with the Princes of Germany, equally alarmed with herself for the Protestant cause.

Her greatest safety lay in the obstinate resistance which the Huguenots still offered to Charles, who found that the sect he thought to exterminate at one blow, had already an army of eighteen thousand men, on foot, besides being possessed of a hundred cities, castles, or fortresses, with the expectation of promised succours from all the other Protestants of Europe. The nobility and gentry of England were roused to such a pitch of enthusiasm, that they offered to raise a force of twenty-two thousand foot and four thousand horse, to transport them into France, and to maintain them six months at their own expense; but Elizabeth, whose good sense and policy never allowed passion or resentment for a moment to obscure her better judgment, refused her consent, fearing to inflame farther the

quarrel between the two religious parties by these dangerous crusades, and to waste a force abroad that she might speedily want to defend her own territories. At this eventful crisis, however, the King of France died at the age of twenty-five. His character contained a mixture of dissimulation, ferocity, quick resentment, and unrelenting vengeance, which is seldom found united in the same human breast.

After the massacre, Europe was every where in commotion. The Hollanders had conceived a reasonable but deadly hatred against the Spanish government, in consequence of the savage cruelties which Alva had inflicted upon them: and, rendered desperate, the Prince of Orange determined to sue for foreign succour to support the revolt of the Dutch, and enable them to maintain their ground. He sent a solemn embassy to London, hoping that either the policy, the ambition, or the generosity of the Queen would engage her to support them under their present calamities. But Elizabeth's politics had always led her to be careful of her own dominions, and not to aim at conquest. She therefore declined the offer of the sovereignty of the Low Countries, but sent a remonstrance to Philip in favour of the Dutch.

England, in the midst of these foreign dissensions, enjoyed profound tranquillity, owing to the prudence and vigour of the Queen's administration. She had closely connected the interests of the Protestants in Scotland with her own, and had twice given them the superiority over their adversaries, so that her power was secure in that quarter. The Queen of

Scots, her antagonist, and the pretender to her throne, was a prisoner in her hands, and by the intrigues she had entered into, had given a pretence for her farther detention; while in regard to religious sects, she had, without more than necessary strictness, kept them in all due subordination; a task of no small difficulty in such turbulent times.

During the tranquillity which England and Scotland had now for some few years enjoyed, the attention and vigilance of the Queen had never relaxed for a moment in forwarding the best interests of her country. But this state of things was interrupted in 1578, and fresh dangers threatened to gather round her, Scotland had heretofore been retained by Morton in strict alliance with the Queen, but in this year factions began to break out to undermine his authority. Elizabeth, of course interested in every revolution that country underwent, as its situation and maritime convenience afforded easy access to her enemies from the neighbouring Catholic countries, and not being separated by sea from England, might furnish her religious or political adversaries with a safe landing-place for any expeditions they might wish to send against her.

Mary Queen of Scots herself had already been induced by the Guises to have recourse to the protection of Philip II., who had become exasperated against Elizabeth for the assistance she rendered to the rebels in the Low Countries; and he sent in the name of the Pope a body of Spaniards and Italians into Ireland, where the inhabitants, always turbulent and discontented with the English government, were ready to join every adventurer. When the

English Ambassador in Spain made complaints of this invasion, he was met by the charge being retorted in consequence of the conduct of Frances Drake, who had a short time previously assaulted the Spaniards in the New World.

That commander, born of mean parents in the county of Devon, had acquired considerable riches by depredations in the Isthmus of Panama, and having there got a sight of the Pacific Ocean, he resolved to employ his whole fortune in a new adventure in those seas, so much unknown at that time to all the European nations, except Spain.

By means of Sir Christopher Hatton, he obtained the Queen approbation and consent, and set sail in 1577, with four ships and a pinnace manned by one hundred and sixty-four able sailors.

He passed into the South Sea, and attacking the Spaniards, who expected no enemy in those quarters, took many rich prizes, and prepared to return with his booty, but fearful that in returning the same way, he might be intercepted, he attempted to find a passage by the north of California. Failing in that attempt, he set sail for the East Indies, and made his way home safely by the Cape of Good Hope, in 1580. He was the first Englishman who had sailed round the globe; and the boldness of his adventures and chivalrous conduct rendered his name thenceforward celebrated in the annals of British enterprise. Many, apprehending the worst consequences from the resentment of the Spaniards, advised the Queen to disavow the undertaking, and restore the treasure; but Elizabeth, who admired valour, resolved to countenance the gallant sailor,

and conferring on him the honour of knighthood, accepted of a banquet from him at Deptford, on board the ship which had achieved so memorable a voyage. The Spaniards, however, effected nothing memorable in Ireland, and were speedily dislodged.

All this time the Duke of Anjou had never entirely dropped his pretensions to Elizabeth, and she appeared flattered by the suit of a man twenty-five years younger than herself. She is said indeed to have had, notwithstanding the greatness of her talents, no inconsiderable portion of vain coquetry. And though the Duke had no knowledge of her person, but from pictures or description, she was still pleased with his addresses. His attentions were great, and besides the Ambassador of the King of France, he employed a private agent of his own, of the name of Simier, an artful, polite, and agreeable man, who kept constantly before the Queen's eyes, in various insinuating and subtle ways, the passion and devotion of his master.

Various intrigues arose hereupon, the Earl of Leicester began to feel alarm lest the young suitor might engage her affections, and played on the credulity of the times by spreading reports that Simier had gained an ascendency over Elizabeth by incantations. Simier in revenge revealed to the Queen what none of her courtiers had dared to disclose, namely, that Leicester was secretly married to the widowed Countess of Essex. Her dignity, and perhaps her self-love was here offended, and she threatened to send him to the Tower. After this Leicester was suspected of having em-

ployed a noted bravo to take away the life of Simier, but the Queen, by proclamation, took him under her special protection. An anecdote is told as occurring about this time, which exhibits Elizabeth's character in a peculiar light, and explains in some degree the secret of that love and veneration which was always shown to her by the people. While the Queen was rowed in her barge on the Thames, attended by her courtiers, a shot was fired, which wounded one of the bargemen: an inquiry was commenced on the spot, and finding it was done by accident, she immediately gave the person his liberty, without farther punishment or investigation. So far was she indeed from entertaining any suspicion against her people, that she was often heard to say, "She would lend credit to nothing against them that parents would not believe of their own children."

The French agents continued their efforts, and the Duke of Anjou, encouraged by the accounts sent him, paid a secret visit to Elizabeth at Greenwich. The purport of their conference is not exactly known, but it was afterwards evident that he had lost no ground by being personally known to her. Soon after, she ordered her ministers to concert with the French Ambassador the terms of the intended contract of marriage, while a splendid embassy was sent over by Henry III., who had succeeded Charles IX. of France, and the articles were soon settled. Many of them which regarded the succession gave great uneasiness to the English, and Elizabeth seems to have struggled for a long time in vain to make up her mind in regard

to this marriage. Thus prompted by inclination, yet powerfully checked by ambition, she vacillated from one resolution to another, sending repeated and contradictory orders to her Ambassador upon the subject, as each impulse had the sway for the time being; so that not only the court of France, but Walsingham himself, who was deeply versed in the human character, and a most penetrating diplomatist, as well as Burleigh and her wisest ministers, were doubtful to which side the balance would eventually turn.

She had also at this time another, but a different struggle to maintain between her temporary inclinations and ruling passions. Having leagued with the French against Spain, the Duke of Anjou expected a supply of money to carry on his operations against Philip in Flanders. Such a supply her frugality made her very reluctant to furnish, but she was at last, after several solicitations, induced to send him a present of a hundred thousand crowns. His campaign was very successful, and flushed with victory, he came over to England in the full hope of being accepted as a husband by Elizabeth. He was well received here, and in the midst of the pomp which attended the anniversary of her coronation, she was seen, after long and intimate discourse with the Duke, to take a ring from her own finger and put it upon his. This was considered by the courtiers as an announcement to the world of her intentions. St. Aldegone, the Ambassador from the States, despatched letters immediately, which every where caused the greatest joy; and the inhabitants of Antwerp, who as well as the

other Flemings, regarded the Queen as a kind of tutelar divinity, testified their satisfaction at this important event, by bonfires and discharges of great ordnance. It is a singular circumstance, that, whatever differences were entertained during this reign, on the subjects of politics or religion, the Queen ever maintained her popularity with her subjects, though she must have been considered chiefly responsible, as she more than once declared she had never called a Parliament, unless it was unavoidable. As an instance in proof, the following extreme case may be given:—A puritan, who had written at this time a violent book, which he entitled, "The Gulph in which England will be Swallowed up by the French Marriage," was ordered by Elizabeth to be prosecuted, and was forthwith condemned as a libeller to lose his right hand; but such was the man's loyalty, that immediately after the execution of the sentence, he took off his hat with the other hand, and waving it over his head, cried aloud, "God save the Queen!"

Notwithstanding the attachment which Elizabeth discovered to the Duke of Anjou, the struggle in her own mind was not over, and the courtiers she most favoured, discovered an extreme aversion to the marriage. Sir Philip Sidney, the most accomplished man of his age, used the freedom of writing her a letter; in which, with uncommon elegance of style and great force of reason, he dissuaded her from her presumed intention. Nothing can be imagined finer or more impressive than this letter, and its contents kept the Queen in great anxiety and irresolution for some time; and indeed she is said to

have passed several nights after its receipt without sleep or repose.

At last her prudence and good sense prevailed over a strong inclination, and she sent for the Duke, who had a long conference with her, wherein she is supposed to have apologized to him for breaking her engagement. He is said on this occasion to have been so enraged at her mutability, as to have cast away in her presence, the ring she had bestowed as a token of affection. He died, however, shortly after, and the distracted state of France prevented the Queen from experiencing the resentment she had incurred from its royal family, by the affront she had given to the Duke D'Anjou.

Elizabeth was kept in constant anxiety, by the intrigues of the Roman Catholics, which never ceased during the whole course of her reign; and at this time (1582) news reached her of a revolution in Scotland, of the young Prince James having fallen into the hands of a body of the nobles. She thereupon sent two Ambassadors to him with advice. France likewise sent two, to inquire into his situation, and make professions of friendship, as also to renew the ancient league between the two countries, and to procure an accommodation between James and his mother, the Queen of Scots, who still remained a prisoner in England. The clergy took offence at this intention of settling the terms between the mother and son, declared it to be a most wicked undertaking, and the pulpits resounded with declamations against the Ambassadors. Nothing was heard on all sides but violence, and the Queen of Scots, who had often made overtures to Elizabeth,

but in vain, now wrote in a most pathetic, and at the same time spirited strain, craving her assistance for the liberty of herself and son.

Elizabeth had little inclination to comply, although age and infirmities had humbled her captive's ambition so far as to induce her to make an offer to live privately in England, that she might enjoy, as she said, "a little more liberty,"—a hope she cherished with the fondest impatience. The Queen of England saw only an unhappy and disadvantageous alternative attending the liberation of Mary, so that all her pathetic pleadings were entirely thrown away. She was distrusted, and Elizabeth was determined to deny her request, though she feigned an assent, knowing well how to disappoint the expectations she might raise in the bosom of the unhappy Mary. According to this determination, a pretended negotiation was opened for setting the Queen of Scots at liberty, and joining her in authority with her son. But no advocate or plenipotentiary was allowed to be sent by Mary, so that the result may be easily conjectured—it fell to the ground.

Whilst these events were passing in England, James, impatient of restraint, made his escape to St. Andrews, and summoned his friends and partisans to attend him. Letters passed between Elizabeth and him, after which Walsingham was sent to ascertain his real character, whose report was so favourable that his mistress was induced to regard him more than she had hitherto done.

The young King of Scots persevered in his views, and after some time the affairs of Scotland settled

into such a form as to meet with the approbation of the English Queen, who maintained a good correspondence with the new court and minister James.

In the year 1594, the Catholics of England, who had been restrained by various acts and measures, but never persecuted, threatened the country with general insurrection. The utmost vigour of government was exerted, and such means were used in discovering conspiracies as the peculiar circumstances of the case alone, if ever these could justify. Spies and informers were employed to discover the most secrets thoughts, as well as actions of men, and by these means several noblemen fell under suspicion, and were confined in their own houses. A letter was intercepted from James Throgmorton, a private gentleman, to Mary Queen of Scots, and upon this charge he was found guilty and executed. A Scotch Jesuit, having embarked in a ship torn some papers and thrown them overboard, they were by an extraordinary accident driven back by the wind upon the shore, and were there picked up and presented to the government. Many dangerous to the government. Many conspiracies were said to have been formed in favour of the Queen of Scots, and all had for their object her liberation, if not aggrandizement, and consequently more strictly confined under the eye of two noblemen of honour and integrity. Yet as Elizabeth was beloved by the whole nation, by all the most zealous Catholics, most of all, formed themselves into an association, bound by an oath to defend the Queen, to avenge her death, or lose

tempt upon her life, but to exclude from the throne all claimants, what title soever they might possess, by whose suggestion or for whose behoof any violence should be offered to her Majesty. At this juncture she summoned a Parliament, from whom she received professions of the most dutiful attachment. The association was confirmed by it, and various measures taken for the greater security of the kingdom. In this Parliament many severe laws were also enacted against Popish priests; and the Catholic religion, which had before been tolerated in many instances, was now totally proscribed. A doctrine was at this time propagated as the opinion of the church of Rome, which tended much to increase the spirit of intolerance amongst the Protestants. It inculcated that so far from being criminal to murder an heretical prince, it was a praiseworthy enterprise; and in accordance with such suggestions many attempts were made to assassinate the English Queen and other Sovereigns of the Protestant faith. These were all frustrated, except that of Baltazar Gerard, a Bungundian, who executed the design he had formed upon the Prince of Orange; and thus in 1584, this famous restorer and protector of religious liberty fell a victim at Delft, to the infatuation of a desperate bigot.

Various misfortunes had previously befallen the States, and by this additional loss, combined with their other causes of depression, they were reduced to a very low ebb, and once more tendered Elizabeth the sovereignty of their country in return for her aid. Two direct and contrary opinions existed in her Council in regard to this offer. But the Queen

took a middle course, and to prevent the subjection of the States, whose interest was closely connected with her own, she sent them assistance during the war, upon even more moderate terms than those offered. So likely was this to bring upon her the whole weight of Philip's vengeance, enforced by the vast power of Spain, that when the King of Sweden heard that Elizabeth had openly espoused the cause of the revolted Flemings, he scrupled not to say, that she had now taken the diadem from her head and adventured it on the doubtful chance of war.

Although Elizabeth was naturally of a cautious and prudent temperament, yet when she saw an evident necessity arise, she braved the greatest dangers with magnanimity, trusting to her own skill and the affections of her people to bear her through all difficulties. After due deliberation the the request of the States then, was agreed to in a certain degree, and the Earl of Leicester, who was as great a favourite as ever, was sent over to Holland at the head of the English auxiliary forces, taking with him a splendid retinue and a select troop of five hundred gentlemen volunteers. His arrival was every where greeted with joyful acclamations and almost sovereign honours; while the title of Governor and Captain-general of the United Provinces was bestowed upon him, and a guard appointed for his protection by the State. This latter step displeased the Queen: she disliked the artifice of her allies, and dreaded its effect upon Leicester's ambition so much, that she severely reprimanded both him and them, and it was with some difficulty they appeased her.

Elizabeth was soon aware that an open breach with Philip was unavoidable; and she therefore resolved to attack him to the best advantage. America was regarded as the chief source of his power, as well as the most defenceless part of his dominions, and she speedily equipped a fleet of twenty sail to attack the Spaniards in the West Indies. Two thousand three hundred volunteers besides seamen engaged on this service. Sir Francis Drake was appointed admiral under the control of the Earl of Carlisle, and after a succession of brilliant victories, the fleet returned to England loaded with riches, which much inflamed the spirit of the nation to attempt future enterprises in that quarter.

Leicester, however, was much less fortunate; he possessed neither courage nor capacity equal to the task he had undertaken; and as Elizabeth had hitherto always appointed to every situation those who were most capable of filling it, it was generally believed that an affection stronger than friendship had biassed her judgment in this instance. The success of the English in an engagement near Zutphen was dearly purchased by the death of Sir Philip Sidney, who there received a wound in his thigh, of which he died October 17th, 1586.

He is described by his cotemporaries as the brightest star of the whole court, and the most perfect model of an accomplished gentleman. Virtuous conduct, polite conversation, heroic valour, and elegant erudition, all concurred in rendering him the pride and delight of the English nation, while his generous humanity has furnished subject for eulogy to every one who knew him.

An instance, we are told, took place in this very action at Zutphen, which may well be recorded here: After the action, it is stated, he was lying on the field, suffering severely from his wounds, when a bottle of water was brought him to relieve his thirst, but observing a soldier near him in a like miserable condition, he said, "This man's necessity is still greater than mine," and resigned to him the water.

In consequence of the threatening aspect of Spain, a league was formed between Elizabeth and James of Scotland for the mutual aid and defence of each other; but very shortly afterwards a conspiracy against the English Queen was discovered, implicating Mary Queen of Scots deeply, and plunging her into more serious dangers than she had yet encountered.

The character, principles, and pretensions of Mary, had induced Elizabeth to follow the dictates of an unjust and jealous policy, and resentment of such conduct had pushed Mary into undertakings which threatened the repose and safety of the kingdom, as well as of the Queen of England. These projects were not unknown to Elizabeth, and rigour and restraint were in consequence more strictly enforced against the captive Queen; and while her natural impatience at the tyranny of her confinement stung her to the quick, her indignant spirit and religious zeal, aggravated by the suggestions of wild bigots, hurried her desperately forward to engage in designs which afforded her watchful enemies the pretence and opportunity they required for effecting her ruin.

Many things combined at this period to make the Catholics seek the downfal of Elizabeth, who had through her whole reign been their steady, though tolerant and unpersecuting enemy. Blinded by a belief of the divine authority and infallibility of the Pope, they revered his bull of excommunication against the Queen, and industriously taught, that whoever perished in the pious attempt of assassinating a heretical sovereign (Elizabeth in particular) would enjoy, without dispute, the never-fading crown of glorious martyrdom. Instigated, there is reason to believe, by the Bishop of Glasgow, Mary's Ambassador in France, a deep conspiracy was entered into by the heads of that party to murder the English Queen and liberate the Queen of Scots. They calculated that the accomplishment of those two great events would arouse the whole body of Catholics to arms, and that foreign forces, taking advantage of the confusion, would easily fix the Queen of Scots on the throne and re-establish the ancient religion.

As we have before observed, these desperate projects had not escaped the vigilance of the Queen's council, and many spies both at home and abroad were employed to sift the plot; but this was not fully accomplished till Gifford, a seminary priest, betrayed his party, and offered his services to Walsingham. This defection sealed the fate of Mary as well as many of her zealous supporters. According to his suggestion, Gifford found a brewer who supplied the household of Mary with ale, and bribed him to convey letters to the captive Queen, which by the connivance of one of those under whose custody she then was, were thrust through a hole in

the wall, and answers returned in the same way by her, little suspecting that these seeming friends were employed by Walsingham to draw her on to her destruction.

The letters informed Mary of the designs laid for a foreign invasion, the plan of an insurrection at home, the scheme for her deliverance, and the conspiracy for assassinating the usurper; adding, that six noble gentlemen would undertake the *tragical execution* thereof. To these communications Mary, it would seem, replied, that she approved highly of the design, and that the death of Elizabeth was necessary, before any attempt was made for her deliverance or an insurrection.

The letters, which were written in cipher, were brought to Walsingham and read by the aid of his clerk. Every artifice was put in practice for its full development, and the whole plot, with the names and pictures of the conspirators discovered. Suspicion was awakened, however, in the process; the accused took alarm and fled, but in spite of their various disguises were retaken and thrown into prison, where the leaders made a full confession of the truth, and fourteen were condemned and executed.

Measures were now taken for the trial and conviction of the Queen of Scots, on whose account and with whose direct concurrence these attempts had been made against the life of the Queen and the tranquillity of the realm. Some of the counsellors were averse to this proceeding, as from ill health, confinement, and disappointed hopes they prognosticated her death would take place at no distant period, and they would at once secure their

object and avoid the odium of such an unprecedented measure of severity. Leicester is said to have advised her being despatched by poison, but Walsingham declared his abhorrence of such a step, and with other noblemen insisted on an open trial. The subject on which they were called upon to give advice placed them in a very peculiar position, for none could doubt that from the Catholics they had cause of much apprehension; and that if Mary should ever mount the English throne, their lives would be the forfeit.

Mary from the strictness of her confinement, had not heard of the detection of the conspirators, till by Elizabeth's orders she was informed of it. She was then removed to Fotheringay Castle; her two secretaries were arrested and her papers seized, when about sixty different keys to ciphers were found amongst them. The Parliament now interfered, and demanded that the Queen of Scots should be brought to trial for the safety and welfare of the nation, which after some perseverance on their parts they succeeded in obtaining. Mary long refused to acknowledge the validity of the procedure, but was by artful management at last brought to answer before the Court, and so gave an appearance of legality to the proceeding. The investigation was long and intricate, but Mary was allowed no counsel. On its termination the Commissioners adjourned from Fotheringay and met in the Star Chamber of London, where the two secretaries vouching for the authenticity of the letters before-mentioned, sentence of death was pronounced upon the unhappy prisoner. Circumspection was necessary in this de-

licate business, and as it was not Elizabeth's interest to quarrel with the Scots, a declaration was published the same day, "That James of Scotland stood in the same place and degree as if sentence had never been pronounced against Mary."

Elizabeth had always dreaded and hated Mary, and had now found a plausible opportunity for vengeance. But she paused ere she put it in execution; for she foresaw the reproaches that would be heaped upon her in such a case. She was perfectly aware that the rights of hospitality, of kindred, of majesty, had all been violated in her conduct to Mary, and she therefore affected tender sympathy and reluctance, and protested that the safety of her people alone could make her hesitate a moment to pardon all the injuries she had personally received from that Princess.

A long train of hypocritical pretences are usually, and with some justice attributed to Elizabeth, and at this stage of the business it was not till remonstrances and supplications without number had been addressed to her by different bodies of her subjects that she even caused proclamation of the sentence to be made, which was received by the people with hearty rejoicings. Mary was no way dismayed by this unfortunate turn in her affairs, but resigned herself calmly as a martyr to her faith. She received much contumelious treatment after this; but in her last letter to Elizabeth, which was full of dignity, meekness, and charity, among other requests was one, that her body might repose in a Catholic land with the sacred relics of her mother. Many of her requests were any thing but agreeable to the Queen,

and not wishing to refuse them she gave no answer to this noble and pathetic epistle. James remonstrated with all the energy of affection and duty, but in vain; and so great was the religious ferment in his own country, that the clergy would not even offer up prayers for his mother at his request. After pursuing this line of conduct, to give an appearance of reluctance to her share of the transaction in the eyes of the world, Elizabeth, at the solicitation of the Parliament and Council, signed the warrant for the death of Mary, and sent it to Fotheringay Castle, where she was beheaded on the 8th of February, 1587. She was denied the presence of her confessor upon this melancholy occasion, but died with great magnanimity and resignation.

Elizabeth had not yet concluded the farce of dissimulation she had lately been playing in regard to Mary's death, but when she was informed of her execution she affected the utmost surprise and indignation, bewailed and lamented her, and would not allow any of her ministers to approach. But seeming to recover herself by degrees, while her sorrows and tears at the same time began to abate, she wrote a letter of apology to James, solemnly disclaiming all knowledge or concurrence in the *accident* which had occurred, with an appeal to the Supreme Judge of Heaven and Earth for her innocence. This letter was long, elaborate and flattering, and like all the Queen's subsequent actions, full of hypocrisy and deceit, but James' concern for his mother was sincere, he refused to admit her Ambassadors to his presence, and breathed nothing but war and vengeance, in which he was upheld by his sub-

jects. The Queen was sensible of her danger, and after allowing a decent interval for him to vent his grief and anger, employed emissaries to set before him every motive of hope or fear, to induce him to live in amity with her; and by the judicious and politic letters of Walsingham to Lord Thirlston, James's secretary, he was by degrees brought again to fall into friendly relations with England.

Elizabeth having thus secured herself from the enmity of her nearest neighbour employed her thoughts to meet a more distant danger, having heard that Philip the Second was secretly preparing a great navy to attack her.

She sent out Sir Frances Drake to intercept his supplies, pillage his coast, and destroy his shipping. This admiral was in all he undertook eminently successful, and the loss of the Spaniards was so great that the intended invasion of England was in consequence delayed a twelvemonth, which enabled the Queen to take more mature measures for her protection. These acts of Elizabeth had engendered such a spirit for naval glory, and also pointed out such a road to wealth, the British adventurers became far more numerous than had ever before been known.

One of these, Thomas Cavendish, a gentleman of Devonshire, who had nearly dissipated a good estate by living at court, being resolved to repair his fortune at the expense of the Spaniards, fitted out three ships at Plymouth, one of a hundred and twenty tons, another of sixty, and a third of forty; with these small vessels he ventured into the South Seas, and committed great depredations on the Spaniards.

He there took nineteen vessels, some of which were richly laden, and returning by the Cape of Good Hope came to London, and entered the river in triumph. His mariners and soldiers he had clothed in silk, his sails were made of damask, with cloth of gold for his top-sails, while his prizes were esteemed the richest that had ever yet been brought to England.

The Queen's enterprises by land were not so advantageous to the English. Leicester had grown so odious to the Dutch, on account of his pride and ambition, that they suspected him of a design upon their liberties, and the jealousy entertained against him, began to extend to the mind of the Queen herself. She recognised the importance of a good understanding with the States during the present conjuncture, and resolved to give them full satisfaction by recalling Leicester, and commanding him at once to resign his government. Prince Maurice was elected in his stead, and Lord Willoughby appointed to act under him in command of the English forces. The faction which Leicester left behind him, however, still, at his suggestion, attempted to disturb all the operations of the States. But as soon as Elizabeth was acquainted with these disorders, she took care effectually to redress them, and obliged all her partisans to coalesce with Prince Maurice.

Notwithstanding the necessity of this interposition of her prudence and authority, Elizabeth could never be made sensible of the vices and incapacity of Leicester. After making various submissions he was restored to her wonted favour, and Lord

Buckhurst, who had accused him, lost her confidence, and was even committed to custody for some time.

Philip, though he had not yet declared war, harboured a secret and violent desire of revenge against Elizabeth, and had long been making preparations to gratify it, on a most extensive scale. To this he was instigated by many feelings and views adverse to the Queen's interests; nor did he lack provocation on her part to excite the bitterest enmity, for she had every where committed hostilities upon him. She had encouraged the revolt of the Protestants in the Netherlands, and had supported them so strenuously that he could never hope again to reduce them to subjection, while the power of England remained entire and continued to support them. Besides these political considerations he regarded her as a bulwark of the Protestants, and imagined that to subdue her was to conquer heresy and thereby acquire a transcendent renown worthy of the champion of Catholicism. As the grand step towards uniting the whole Christian world in the Catholic communion, he resolved to invade England, the fate of which he vainly imagined would be determined by one battle on land and another at sea; for after an enemy had once obtained admittance, he supposed the difficulty would be over, as the country was neither fortified by art nor nature. A long peace, he argued likewise, had deprived it of military discipline and experience, and the Catholics would render ready assistance to any invader. The prosperous state of his affairs at that period gave him san-

guine hopes of accomplishing all his wishes, while the conquest of Portugal, his East India settlements, and the vast treasures yearly imported from America, afforded him ample means.

After his resolution was taken, every preparation was urged on, and the most experienced commanders appointed to carry it into effect. The dockyards and arsenals were crowded with workmen, vessels of great force were built, naval stores provided at much expense, provisions amassed, armies levied and quartered in all the maritime towns of Spain; and in short plans were arranged for fitting out such a fleet and armament as had never before been seen in Europe. Our limits enable us to give but a faint idea of these vast and extensive preparations of Philip. The Spaniards, elated with hope and prognosticating nothing but success from such exertions, had already given their navy the name of "The Invincible Armada." Philip indeed was so proud of his strength that he published an account of this armament in Spanish, Latin, Dutch, and French, with a view as was afterwards alleged, to strike a terror into his enemies wherever it might appear, while he endeavoured to conceal the real destination of his force by stating that it was intended for India. But Elizabeth had long foreseen the invasion, and prepared for the most strenuous resistance. She felt that the contest was coming which she had dreaded during her whole reign, and to avert which she had taken every precaution, and perhaps somewhat strained her authority. For the purpose of avoiding this crisis she had fomented the quarrels in Scotland, leagued with

France, supported the Protestants in the Netherlands, and lastly beheaded Mary. All this had she done to avoid a Catholic and Protestant collision in England; and now she found it approaching, while she was surrounded by many noble and powerful foes at home, and obliged, unaided by foreign assistance, to await the attacks of by far the greatest sovereign in Europe leagued with others of weight and importance, and supported by an armament such as had never been seen in those days, composed of veteran troops and able commanders, well supplied with every munition of war. She felt that her crown, and with it the very existence of Protestantism, was the stake for which they were about to play, and that every effort which prudence could suggest would be requisite to win the difficult game; but she was not dismayed, though all Europe doubted not that she must be overwhelmed. Her force indeed seemed inadequate to resist so potent an enemy, for all the sailors in England amounted but to about fourteen thousand men, and except a few of the Queen's ships of war there were not four merchant vessels which exceeded four hundred tons burden in her ports. The royal navy at this time consisted only of twenty-eight sail, of which none surpassed the bulk of our largest frigates, while many were small in size, and some even deserved only the name of pinnaces. The English seamen were, however, dexterous and courageous, they had been accustomed to sail in the most tempestuous seas and to expose themselves to every danger; and in this alone consisted the superiority of the British fleet. But the courage of the men as

much exceeded that of the Spanish mariners as their ships were inferior in size and force to those of that nation.

All the commercial towns in England were required to furnish vessels (for at this time commerce was exclusively confined to sea-port towns, as our inland trade and manufactures were insignificant and few,) for re-enforcing this small navy, which was done with the greatest alacrity. The citizens of London, to show their zeal in the common cause, instead of fifteen which they were commanded to equip, furnished double that number. Forty-five were supplied by the nobility and gentry, and all the loans of money which the Queen demanded were frankly granted. But the prospects of the kingdom notwithstanding were naturally clouded, and its chief support rested in the prudence and vigour of the Queen's conduct, who undaunted by the threatening dangers issued her orders with calm tranquillity, and employed every resource within her reach to strengthen her forces for defence. Sir Robert Sidney was sent into Scotland to show James that he was in equal danger with the Queen from the Spanish tyrant, and to demand his co-operation, while her solicitations with the King of Denmark and the tie of their common religion, induced him to seize a squadron of ships belonging to Philip then riding in the Danish harbour. The Hans Towns also delayed the equipment of some of his vessels so long in their ports that they became useless for the purpose of invading England. The eyes of all the Protestants in Europe were now fixed upon Elizabeth, as if this cri-

tical event was to decide for ever the fate of their religion. Distance prevented them joining their forces to hers, but they beheld with anxiety and admiration the intrepid countenance with which she regarded the coming struggle; and the Queen was sensible that next to her popularity and the confidence of her subjects, which she fully enjoyed, the best support of her throne was the zeal of the people for the Protestant religion and the strong feelings of hatred they had imbibed against Popery. These feelings were kept alive by every contrivance, and, all the enormities, executions, and horrid cruelties of the Inquisition, and the bloody massacres which had taken place in the Low Countries, and in England during the reign of Mary were attributed to Spain and Spanish influence. It was also confidently rumoured and implicitly believed that the Armada was loaded with every instrument of torture that human ingenuity could invent, to be used as occasion required for the purpose of recalling the lost sheep to the Catholic fold. In short every thing was done to animate the people to a vigorous defence of their country, their religion, their laws and their liberties. Yet in this hour of danger and of difficulty, when the popular feeling would have been gratified with a contrary line of policy, Elizabeth treated the Catholics with moderation, and exercised no undistinguishing fury against them. Although she knew that the Pope, Sixtus Quintus, famous only for his tyranny, had fulminated another bull against her, by which he absolved her subjects from the oath of allegiance, and promised plenary indulgences to

all who were engaged in this invasion, she entertained a hope that her Catholic subjects would not turn against their native country, though past experience had demonstrated to her the readiness with which they would plot against their sovereign. Relying upon this hope, therefore, she rejected all violent counsels, contenting herself with peaceful reasonings and a forcible exhortation to them to do their duty, and in return for this generous policy the Catholics showed great zeal for the public service. Many volunteered into the fleet and army, others equipped ships at their own expense, and gave the command to Protestants; indeed all seemed to forget for the present party distinctions, each was emulous to prepare with the greatest alacrity, order, and enthusiasm for the defence of their country.

To excite to the utmost the martial spirit of the nation, Elizabeth appeared on horseback in the camp at Tilbury, and riding through the lines with an animated and cheerful countenance, she exhorted the soldiers to remember their duty to their country and religion, and professed her intention, though a woman, to lead them herself into the field and perish in battle rather than survive the ruin and slavery of her people. By this spirited behaviour the soldiery became enthusiastically attached to her person, and resolutely determined never to relinquish the defence of their heroic Princess.

At last the Spanish Armada was ready for sea. but the moment it was preparing to sail, the Admiral, Santa Croce, was seized with a fever, of which he died, and by a strange concurrence of

circumstances, the Vice-Admiral at the same time died also. The Duke of Medina Sidonia was appointed to succeed, but he was inexperienced in sea affairs; and the delay thus unavoidably occasioned, gave the English more time for preparation.

In spite of the loss of their best commander, however, they set sail with undiminished hopes, from Lisbon, on May 29th, 1588, but on the next day a violent tempest arose which scattered their ships, sinking some and forcing all that remained to take shelter and refit.

When the news of this event reached England, the Queen prematurely concluded from the letter of her French Ambassador, that the design of an invasion was over for the present, and gave orders for laying up some of the ships, and discharging the seamen; but the Admiral took the liberty of disobeying these orders, and begged to retain all the ships in the service, which being granted, he sailed in quest of the Spaniards, hoping to surprise some of the detached portions of their fleet; but a northerly breeze springing up, he immediately returned to the Channel, lest they should make their appearance in his absence, and thus find England defenceless.

The Armada was in the mean time repaired and again set sail with renewed expectations. It consisted of a hundred and thirty vessels, of which one hundred were larger than any before used in Europe, and it carried on board nineteen thousand two hundred and ninety-five soldiers, eight thousand four hundred and fifty-six mariners, two thousand and

eighty-eight galley slaves, and two thousand six hundred and thirty great pieces of brass ordnance. It was victualled for six months, and was attended by twenty lesser ships and ten slaves with six oars a-piece.

The plan formed by the King of Spain was, that the Armada should sail to the coast opposite Dunkirk and Newport, and having chased away all English and Flemish vessels, receive the Duke of Parma, who had an army of thirty thousand men in the Netherlands ready to embark, and sail boldly to the Thames, where the combined armies were to land and complete at one blow the conquest of England, by the capture of London. While under sail they took a fisherman, who informed them that the English Admiral having heard of the tempest which had scattered the Armada, had laid up his ships and discharged most of his seamen. Upon this false intelligence the Duke of Medina broke through his orders and sailing direct to Plymouth, made the Lizard about sunset, which he mistook for the Ramhead near that place, and bore out again to sea, with the intention of returning the next day to destroy the English navy. The Fleet was discovered by a Scottish Pirate, at that time roving in those seas, who immediately set sail to inform the English Admiral of their approach. Effingham had but just time to get out of port, when he saw t Spanish Armada coming full sail towards him; osed in the form of a crescent, and stretching distance of seven miles from one extremity to ich the writers of that age, describe imposing and magnificent spectacle.

Lord Howard gave orders not to come to close fight, as the Spanish ships were filled with soldiers, but to cannonade them at a distance, and to wait the chances which might be afforded by winds, currents, or accidents, of taking some of the vessels. This opportunity soon occurred to Sir Francis Drake, who had the good fortune to take two, and in going up the Channel the English kept up a constant skirmish with the Armada, while the nobility and gentry hastened out with private vessels from every harbour to re-enforce the Admiral. By this generous and disinterested service, the English fleet soon amounted to a hundred and forty sail.

The Spaniards now cast anchor at Calais, to wait for the Duke of Parma. But some fire ships sent amongst them in the night soon put them to flight in disorder, and in the engagement that followed the English took twelve of their ships and damaged many others, with the loss of only one small vessel. Upon this news reaching Belgium, the Duke of Parma refused to embark his troops, alleging as his excuse that the English were masters of the sea.

Thus deserted and disheartened by the disadvantages under which he laboured and which he found increase with the combat, the Spanish Admiral proposed to return home, but the wind being contrary he sailed northwards, and so violent a tempest overtook them near the Orkneys, that not one half of the navy ever returned to Spain.

Such was the result of this famous attempt to invade England, which had been planned and equipped with all the art and care which human foresight could devise for the total ruin of Elizabeth, but

which served more than ever to establish her reputation and authority. She had immediately a double subsidy voted her, and her prerogatives acknowledged in every respect by the Parliament, whilst the veneration she acquired, and the spirit of subordination infused into her subjects, gave the Queen great security during the remainder of her reign.

A trait alike characteristic of Elizabeth's passion and avarice is reported to have been displayed at this time, on the death of the Earl of Leicester, who had long enjoyed the greatest degree of favour at Court. The grief she felt at his loss is said to have drawn copious tears from her eyes, but was insufficient to restrain her from ordering a public sale of his goods, in order to repay her the sums he had borrowed during his life.

Her diplomacy in Scotland, served her not so well in peace as in war, and in spite of all the intrigues of the English court, the marriage of the King of Scotland took place with the youngest daughter of the Danish Monarch.

Elizabeth was now freed from foreign enemies, and placed in a situation where she was removed from all danger of any immediate revolution at home; and she went on amidst a succession of momentous events passing in all the countries around her, in the same tenor of conduct, retaining the warm affection of her subjects, and an absolute control over her Parliament. She personally made that body a spirited harangue, in which she showed the justice and moderation of her government, expressed her small ambition of making conquests, displayed the just grounds of her quarrel with the

King of Spain, and declared how little she apprehended the power of that Monarch, even if he made a greater effort against her than those which sent forth the invincible Armada. "But I am informed," added she, "that when he attempted this last invasion, some upon the sea-coast forsook their towns, fled up higher into the country, and left all naked and exposed to his entry. But I swear unto you, by God, if I knew those persons, or may know of any that shall do so hereafter, I will make them feel what it is to be fearful in so urgent a cause."

From this period innumerable enterprises were undertaken by the English against the Spaniards, succeeding one another with little or no intermission, and many losses occurred to Spain from these attacks; but still the most severe blows given to Philip were from the side of France.

There Henry the Fourth had succeeded to the crown in 1589, and being a Protestant was exposed to apparently insurmountable difficulties from the combined efforts of the Leaguers and Philip. In this posture of affairs, deserted by many of his Catholic subjects, and opposed to a most powerful body of them, united in the League which had been formed against his predecessor, and with that body supported from without by the cordial assistance of Philip, Henry was reduced to great straits, when he cast his eyes towards England. At war, and without funds, he addressed himself to Elizabeth, and found her well disposed to assist him in opposing the progress of these her inveterate enemies. She made him a present of twenty-two thousand pounds; a greater sum, he declared, than he had ever seen

before, and sent to his aid a body of four thousand men. He employed this English re-enforcement in many of his enterprises, having good reason to praise their courage and fidelity; and on their time of service being elapsed he dismissed them with many high commendations. Early in the course of these wars the Governor of Brittany had declared for the League, and being hard pressed by Henry's troops, was obliged to introduce into the sea-ports of that province some Spanish forces. Elizabeth was alarmed at the danger to which this would subject her commerce, for she foresaw that the English seas would be infested with privateers, and the French harbours employed for the purpose of another invasion of England.

She concluded, therefore, a new treaty with Henry, engaging to assist him with forces both by sea and land; and in conformity with this promise, the Earl of Essex, a young nobleman of great real merit as well as exterior accomplishments, who now occupied that place in the affections of Elizabeth, which had been left void by the death of Leicester, was appointed General, and appears to have been very ardent in the pursuit of military fame. Pressed as Henry was on all sides by powerful foes, many disappointments occurred, and but indifferent success attended their efforts; but Elizabeth was strongly impressed with the necessity of supporting the King, and she entered into a yet more favourable treaty with him, in which she agreed never to make peace with Philip but by mutual consent. During these operations with France, she employed her naval power for their aid and protection against

Spain; but although great courage was displayed no advantage was gained. Various expensive and hazardous enterprises were now undertaken, and indeed the mania for naval adventure seems to have pervaded the whole nation. Thomas Whyte, a Londoner, took two Spanish ships, which besides fourteen hundred chests of quicksilver, contained above two million of bulls for indulgences; a commodity useless to the English, but which had cost the King of Spain three hundred thousand florins, and would have been sold by him in the Indies for five millions.

This war did great damage to Spain, but the expense of maintaining the British troops in Flanders and France, with the cost of the navy, amounted to one million two hundred thousand pounds, which, notwithstanding Elizabeth's extreme frugality, her revenue could ill support, and she therefore summoned a Parliament, in order to obtain a farther supply. But the Queen either thought her authority so established that she need make no concessions to her Parliament in return, or rated her power and prerogative above money. Be the reason what it may, she treated this Parliament with great haughtiness, and showed evidently a determination to rule church and state without control: she dictated to the House what it should, and what it should not do; and to all her injunctions the Commons were obsequious. After some slight difference between the Lords and Commons regarding a punctilio, as to which should introduce bills of subsidy, they agreed to vote the large sum required: but, notwithstanding all their concessions Elizabeth ended

the session with a speech, containing some reprimands, and full of the same high pretensions which she had assumed at the opening of Parliament.

Henry the Fourth, as well as the Huguenots, now clearly saw that nothing but his abjuration of the Protestant religion would ever give peace to France. He therefore renounced it, and was solemnly received by the Prelates of the Catholic Church again into its bosom.

Upon this proceeding Elizabeth wrote him an angry letter, but knowing that the League and the King of Spain were still their common enemies, she listened to his apologies, and renewed the treaty never to make peace with Spain but by mutual consent. On the other side a dangerous conspiracy was discovered between some Catholic noblemen in Scotland and Philip of Spain. The plan was for the Scotch confederates to join their forces to a body of Spanish troops which Philip would send, and re-establish the Catholic religion in Scotland; that they were then to march with their united power into England and there effect the same purpose. It was, however, prematurely discovered, and the Queen sent her Ambassador to represent to James the necessity of making a public example, by executing the noblemen engaged and confiscating their estates. The state of his finances prevented his doing this, and he thereupon requested assistance in men and money from Elizabeth, but could not prevail, though the cause was certainly a common one; indeed the tenth part of the expense which she had bestowed on the French King would have been sufficient to effect this purpose and to place that part of

the island in security. But she seems to have entertained a personal dislike to James, both as her heir and as the son of Mary, which she allowed to become but too apparent by sheltering Bothwell, who having attempted to seize the King's person, and being expelled from Scotland, had taken refuge in England, where he was secretly protected by Elizabeth. James, however, by his own exertions, was at last able to drive those factious men from his kingdom. An attempt to take the life of the Queen by poison was also discovered, originating with the agents of Philip, with whom she remonstrated, but of course received no satisfaction. To effect their purpose they had employed her domestic physician, a Jew, who suffered on the scaffold with an accomplice he had engaged.

Elizabeth now withdrew her forces from the armies of Henry IV., who was at length able to defend himself, and also from the States where they were no longer necessary. The former treaties of mutual assistance and defence were renewed with each, however, and expeditions were still undertaken to different parts of the globe, particularly America and Spain, though no immediate benefit resulted from any. In one of these Sir Frances Drake and Sir John Hawkins both died.

The success of the Spaniards in France, but more particularly in Picardy, where Calais had fallen into their hands in 1596, caused the Queen much uneasiness, and proportionably raised the expectations of the King of Spain.

It being ascertained that Philip was once more making great preparations for an invasion of Eng-

land, a powerful fleet was equipped at Plymouth for the defence of the country. It consisted of one hundred and seventy English vessels, to which the Hollanders added twenty ships; and in this fleet were embarked between six and seven thousand soldiers, in addition to a thousand volunteers, and nearly seven thousand seamen, besides the Dutch.

The land forces were commanded by the Earl of Essex, whilst the navy was placed under the control of the High Admiral, Lord Effingham. They sailed with a fair wind for Cadiz, and when near that place were informed by an Irish vessel, that the port was full of merchant ships of great value, and the Spaniards living without any suspicion of an enemy. The council of war resolved to attack the ships in the bay. Although the Admiral himself entertained great scruples in regard to the prudence of this step, Essex, however, strenuously recommended the enterprise, and when the resolution was taken, he threw his hat into the sea, at the same time giving way to the most extravagant joy.

He felt great mortification, however, upon being informed that the Queen, fearing his youthful ardour and feeling anxious for his safety, had given secret orders that he should not be allowed to lead the van in the attack. In accordance with these instructions, the Admiral exacted a promise that he should keep in the midst of the fleet, which he speedily forgot, and breaking through pressed forward into the thickest of the fire. He landed his men, and marched forward to the attack of Cadiz, sweeping all before him, and spreading a terror through the whole country; the city was soon carried by

their impetuous valour, and they took the citadel on the following day.

As soon as the town capitulated, Essex generously stopped the slaughter, and treated his prisoners with the greatest kindness. The plunder taken by the English was great, but they missed much more from the Spaniards burning all their richest ships to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. Having secured what they had obtained, the English set fire to the city, and re-embarked. Besides the disgrace cast upon the Spanish arms their loss was computed to amount to twenty million of ducats.

Essex had so many other conquests in view, that his companions could not drag him from the enemy, but left him on the sea, with only a few ships to await the arrival of the Indian carracks, which were looked for about this time.

On his return, he complained loudly of the want of spirit displayed by his comrades, and also of the Admiral's claiming the merit of taking Cadiz, which was his act. But the Queen, though she expressed the highest admiration of his genius and much esteem for his services, created Effingham, Earl of Nottingham, a distinction which his services well merited.

On the return of the English fleet, Philip collected together all the vessels he could engage in his harbours to make a descent upon England, thinking thereby to take it by surprise, but ere he could approach her shores, his armament was again dispersed by a violent storm which destroyed several ships and rendered the attempt abortive. In the spring of the next year, however, [1597] Elizabeth received in-

telligence that in spite of the shattered state of their navy, the Spaniards were preparing for a descent upon Ireland, which she was resolved if possible to prevent. A large fleet was again prepared, filled with the finest troops and conducted by some of the most renowned leaders England could boast, the Earl of Essex, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Lord Thomas Howard. Essex, with his usual energy, declared his resolution either to destroy the new armada which threatened England, or to perish in the attempt; but if successful in this, to intercept the rich fleet of India merchant vessels on their return home. This powerful expedition set sail from Plymouth July 9th, 1599, but owing to contrary winds, storms, and a dispute which broke out between the Earl and Sir Walter Raleigh, it was obliged to return without effecting any thing. Whilst on the voyage back a Spanish fleet from Fariola was heard of, steering towards Cornwall, to make a descent there, but a storm sprang up and raged so violently, that both armaments were dispersed without getting sight of each other. Before the English vessels were refitted, Essex thought it best, as the delay had been great and their provisions ran short, to discharge all the soldiers except a thousand veterans, and to confine his enterprise to the second object, namely, the intercepting of the Indian fleet.

Many circumstances arose to interrupt the concord of the officers, and to raise animosities between the gallant commanders, so that in this effort Essex took only three ships, but which were rich enough to repay all the expenses of the expedition. On their return, every circumstance of this affair

was canvassed, and parties were formed in favour of the two prominent persons, Essex and Raleigh. The people in general, who bore an extreme regard to the gallantry, spirit, and generosity of the former, were warm in justifying every part of his conduct; but the Queen observed a prudent neutrality, and endeavoured to share her rewards with an impartial hand between them. Thus she equally balanced the honours she conferred upon them, and although Essex was promoted to the dignity of Earl Marshal of England, he might have perceived by other signs that it was not the intention of his Sovereign to give him any ascendency over his rivals, and might also have learnt from her demeanour the necessity of moderation and caution. But he was too open and candid to practise the arts of a courtier, and gave his enemies many advantages over him by his haughty bearing towards them.

Things went not so well in France as they had done upon the sea, and Henry, after the greatest expressions of gratitude to Elizabeth for her generous supplies in his distress, was obliged to conclude a separate peace with Philip.

The Queen was undismayed by this act of Henry's, for she knew that she could finish the war with Spain on equitable terms when she pleased, having foiled Philip in every contest; but she was disposed, however, to try again her fortune in the endeavour to follow up her victories. On this subject Burleigh and Essex differed in opinion, Essex coinciding with the Queen in advocating a continuance of the war, whilst Burleigh was for making peace at that favourable time. Disputes ran high and the impe-

tuosity of Essex gave great offence at court, but after a time the partiality of Elizabeth prevailed, and he was again taken into favour, while Burleigh's death opened a clear path for the ambition of his rival, and nothing but his own indiscretion remained to shake his well established credit at the court of London.

Soon after the loss of Burleigh, which the Queen extremely lamented, news arrived of the decease of Philip the Second. Thus did death at once deprive her of her best friend and bitterest enemy.

From bad government and a variety of causes, the state of Ireland had long been very unsettled, and the affairs of that country at last came to such a dangerous head, that temporizing would no longer suffice to maintain even the shadow of English authority. The Queen saw the necessity of more decisive measures, and called her council together to consider what steps should be taken to oppose the progress of the natives, who, under the guidance of Tyrone, threatened to drive the English across the channel. At this council the Earl of Essex advocated strong measures, and appeared anxious to gain the command of the necessary expedition for their enforcement. His enemies joined with his friends to procure his appointment, hoping thereby to free themselves from his presence at court, and be enabled to seize such opportunities as might offer to work his fall; and Elizabeth, who was much prepossessed in favour of his talents, made him Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. She furnished him also with an army of more than twenty thousand men, and granted him extraordinary powers for peace or war, while every thing was done to ensure his success.

Essex was a young nobleman, highly popular with the nation as well as in favour with the Queen, for his great talents, open candour, dauntless valour, noble bearing, and military renown, and would indeed have rendered himself invincible had he added to these temper and judgment, or even reserve; but he was uncontaminated with subterfuge or disguise, whether in treating with courtiers or dealing with his more open rivals. His enemies, however, hoped that from the height of the Queen's expectations regarding this enterprise, disappointment would and must ensue; and that in the event of its failure, all the high anticipations of the nation would be disappointed, and found to be misplaced.

The charge, however, was gladly undertaken, and Essex left London attended by a numerous train of nobles and gentlemen, who attached themselves to his fortunes from personal regard, as well as to distinguish themselves and acquire renown and experience in arms. Wherever he passed, he was greeted with the acclamations of the populace, who were enthusiastic in their admiration of his vigorous, bold, and generous character; but upon his arrival in Ireland, the first act of his authority was an indiscretion not to be overlooked, though springing from a noble impulse characteristic of his nature. He appointed his intimate friend, the Earl of Southampton, general of the horse, although that nobleman had so far incurred the Queen's displeasure by marrying without her consent, that she had enjoined Essex not to employ him. The Lieutenant was reprimanded, and ordered to withdraw the commission, but he still had the imprudence to he-

sitate till the orders were reiterated, before he would displace his friend.

The little success which attended the arms of Essex, who employed his large forces and consumed his time in what appeared to be frivolous undertakings, instead of following the tenour of his own counsels, soon disgusted the Queen, who entirely disapproved of his proceedings. He persisted, however, and even agreed to meet the Irish rebel Tyrone in conference regarding a peace; and a cessation of arms for some time was agreed upon, although he had censured preceding Lieutenants who had not a tithe of his force at their command for the same acts. This rebel was now treated with every distinction, although it was well known that he was in the habit of fomenting all disorders which were likely to overturn or weaken the English government. The Queen was extremely provoked at such inexplicable conduct, and such a result of all the great and expensive preparations which had been made to reduce this very chief.

Essex on his part wrote many peevish and impatient letters to the Queen and Council, complaining of his enemies, and discovering a state of mind equally haughty and discontented.

Elizabeth did not fail to notify to him her displeasure, but suspecting that some secret plot was concocting by her favourite, she commanded him to remain in Ireland till farther orders, intending to be prej ed on his return if such should be the case.

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, ›bert Cecil, to an office which he him-

self aspired to; and dreading the total alienation of the Queen's regard, he adopted a resolution which he knew had once succeeded with the Earl of Leicester. He therefore set out for England immediately, and arrived at Court before any one was apprized of his intention. Covered with dust from his journey, he hastened to the Presence Chamber, and thence to the Privy Chamber, nor stopped till he had reached the Queen's bed-room. She was just risen, and he threw himself on his knees and kissed her hand, beseeching a private conference, which was immediately granted; and he was altogether so graciously received, that on his departure he was heard to thank God, that though he had suffered many storms abroad, he found a sweet calm at home. But this placability of Elizabeth was merely the result of surprise, and of the momentary pleasure she felt at the unexpected appearance of her favourite. When Essex waited upon her in the afternoon, he found her demeanour quite changed. Having had leisure for reflection, his faults had recurred to her mind, and she thought it necessary, by severe discipline, to subdue that haughty and imperious spirit, which presuming on her partiality had led him to act on the most important occasions without regard to her commands or instructions. She now ordered him to be confined to his chamber, and to be twice examined by the Council, to whom his answers were calm and submissive; yet she committed him to the custody of the Lord Keeper, and would not permit him for the present to see or write even to his Countess.

He expressed perfect submission to the Queen's

will, and declared his intention, when liberated, of going into the country, to lead a life of retirement far from court and business. But though he affected to be so entirely cured of his aspiring ambition, the vexation he felt from the triumph his enemies had gained, worked and preyed upon his haughty mind till he fell in consequence into a dangerous state of ill health. Elizabeth had always declared that it was her wish to correct, not to ruin him, and she now felt great alarm at his situation, and ordered eight physicians of the first reputation to consult upon his case. Upon their report being made she sent Dr. James to him to state that as she understood they had much fear for the result of his illness, she desired that physician to convey her assurances to him, that if she had thought the steps consistent with her honour, she would have come herself to pay him a visit. Nothing could exhibit a greater concern for the prisoner, and the by-standers who narrowly watched her countenance while delivering the message, saw her eyes suffused in tears.

The faction opposed to him were alarmed at the returning affection of the Queen, and Sir Walter Raleigh, his most violent enemy, was so struck with the revolution in her feelings, that he in his turn fell sick, when Elizabeth charitably applied the same remedy, by sending him a favourable communication expressive of her desire for his speedy recovery.

The medicine which the Queen administered to these ambitious rivals was successful with both. Essex was soon declared out of danger. An un-

derhand suspicion, however, was instilled into Elizabeth's mind that his distemper had been entirely counterfeited in order to move her to compassion, and she relapsed into her former rigour towards him. The Earl wrote her a letter, and sent her a rich present on New Year's day, as was usual with the courtiers at that time. And after some short interval of severity, she allowed him to return to his own house, but still to remain in custody; and so grateful was he for this lenity, that he sent her a letter of thanks——

"This further degree of goodness (said he) doth sound in my ears as if your Majesty spake these words, 'Die not, Essex; for though I punish thine offence and humble thee for thy good, yet will I one day be served again by thee.' My prostrate soul makes this answer: 'I hope for that blessed day,' and in expectation of it, all my afflictions of body and mind are humbly, patiently, and cheerfully borne by me."

The Countess of Essex, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, possessed, as well as her husband, a refined taste in literature, and the chief consolation which Essex enjoyed during this time of anxiety and expectation consisted in her company, and in reading with her those instructive and entertaining authors which even during his active life and at the time of his greatest prosperity he had never entirely neglected.

The Queen's anger was kept alive by the accounts from Ireland, which convinced her more and more of the misconduct of Essex. Tyrone, so far from being quelled had broken the truce, joined

his forces with those of other rebels, and almost overran the country. He boasted of his ability to obtain certain supplies from Spain, of being the champion of the Catholic religion, and exulted in having received a consecrated Phœnix plume from the Pope.

To check the progress of this rebel and re-establish her authority, Elizabeth appointed Mountjoy, Lord-Deputy. He long excused himself under the plea of bad health, desiring earnestly the return of his intimate friend Essex to the government, but the Queen obliged him to take the command. When thus compelled to act, he found the Island almost in a desperate condition, but by strenuous efforts and the complete success of his vigorous and active measures, he managed to give new life to the Queen's authority in that quarter.

The comparison between the administration of Mountjoy and Essex was most unfavourable to the latter, and the Queen received additional disgust from the partiality of the people, who were prepossessed in an extravagant degree in his favour, and complained loudly of the injustice of his confinement. His popularity seemed rather increased than diminished by his misfortunes, and Elizabeth, to justify her conduct, at one time intended to have him tried in the Star Chamber, but her tender affection prevailed over every sterner impulse, and he was only examined by the Privy Council, where Coke, the Attorney-General, opened the case against him. This great lawyer was known for the cruelty and insolence he always exerted against the unfor-

tunate, and every fault Essex had committed, was by him and his other accusers exaggerated excessively, while his sudden return from Ireland was designated by them as nothing short of an insolent opposition to her Majesty's commands.

Essex entered on his defence in a very affecting speech, avowing his resolution never to enter into a contest with his Sovereign. She might, he said, impute to him what crimes she pleased, and he would submit to her decision; making only one reserve, which he never would relinquish but with life, which was, the possession of a loyal and unpolluted heart, of an unfeigned affection for the Queen, and an earnest desire ever to perform to her Majesty the best services his poor abilities would permit. Let them allow this, and he would acquiesce, he declared, in any sentence they should pronounce against him.

This submission was uttered with so much eloquent feeling and in so pathetic a manner, that it drew tears from his auditory, and the Privy Counsellors did the Earl strict justice as far as regarded the loyalty of his intentions. Had he been tried in the Star Chamber, his sentence in all probability, would have been an enormous fine and imprisonment in the Tower, whereas the Council was contented with declaring that, "The Earl of Essex is not to execute the office of a Counsellor, nor that of Earl Marshal of England, nor of Master of the Horse, and is to return to his own house, there to continue prisoner till it shall please her Majesty to relieve him from this and all the rest of his sentence." The general expectation entertained was

that Essex, after all his disgraces, would again be speedily established in the good graces of the Queen, and enjoy more favour than ever. He was shortly afterwards reinstated in his office of Master of the Horse, and though not permitted to appear at court, all his friends were allowed unrestricted access to him. He wrote to Elizabeth, that "He kissed her Majesty's hand, and the rod with which she had corrected him, but that he could never recover his wonted cheerfulness till she deigned to admit him to her presence."

These, and many other sentiments of the same kind pleased her very much, and she replied, that she trusted his actions would correspond with his words; that he had tried her patience a long time, and that her father would never have pardoned such obstinacy, but that "if the furnace of afflictions produced such good effects, she should ever after have the better opinion of her chemistry."

The Earl was possessed of a patent for the monopoly of sweet wines, whose term of existence was nearly expired, and he patiently waited to see if the Queen would renew it. This he regarded as the criterion of his fate, and her decision the omen that ɔuld determine if he should ever again enjoy credit d authority with her. His enemies, who c ıtly surrounded the Queen, found means to per de h that he ought to be deprived of this v ı a and when his application for a re- ıs de, she denied his request accord- ɣ e adding in a contemptuous manner,

"that an ungovernable beast must be stinted in his provender."

In this measure rigour was certainly pushed a step too far, and became the ruin of this chivalrous young nobleman, as well as the source of infinite sorrow to the Queen herself. Essex, by the decision was deprived of all hope, and believing Elizabeth quite inexorable, burst the bounds of prudence, and determined at once to proceed to extremities against his enemies. Despairing of his ability to subdue the Queen's resentment by humility, he flew to the other extreme, and took every method to increase his popularity; this he knew she would most resent. Nay, in his fury he even vented indecent expressions against her, saying, "The old woman was as crooked in mind as in body." He thus gave every advantage to his enemies; for although Elizabeth now approached her seventieth year, she still listened graciously to every personal compliment, with a degree of vanity not quite subservient to her good sense.

Essex also entered into correspondence with James of Scotland in regard to the succession. And blinded by rage against his enemies, concerted with a council of malcontents the most violent methods of ruining those who opposed him. Implicitly depending upon his own adherents and general popularity to carry him through, he planned an attempt upon the palace, in which, after the rest had seized upon the gates, Essex was to rush in, and with all humility entreat the Queen to remove her present advisers. This being accomplished, he was next to oblige her to assemble a Parliament, with

whom he purposed by common consent to settle a new plan of government.

Our space will not permit us to trace minutely the various ways in which Essex thus involved himself beyond recall, but of these measures the Queen's ministers were not ignorant, and playing upon his candid and unsuspicious nature, they placed some of their agents about him, who led him into the snare they had laid to entrap him, by advising the rashest measures, and supporting their advice by false reports of the affection with which the people regarded him, the Londoners in particular. Thus they induced him to open the plot in the capital, assuring him in such a case of the immediate assistance of the trained bands and a large body of the citizens; but when he marched thither not a soul responded to his call, though many looked quietly on, and he was obliged to retire to his house without the addition of a single follower.

The Earl at last saw that he was betrayed, but would not be persuaded by his confederates to fly, protesting that he was resolved to undergo any fate rather than submit to live the life of a fugitive. He was taken with his accomplices shortly after, and by the Queen's orders the Earls of Essex and Southampton were arraigned before a jury of twenty-five Peers, when the guilt of the prisoners was too apparent and too well established by proof to admit of a doubt, and sentence of death was accordingly pronounced. Essex spoke like a man who expected nothing but speedy execution. He said he should be sorry to be represented to the Queen as one who despised her clemency, but he

should not make any cringing submissions to obtain it.

After passing some days in prison, his pride was somewhat subdued, not by the fear of death but by religion, which now took a firm hold of his mind, and prevailed over every other consideration.

Elizabeth had always affected the character of humanity and mildness, but the situation of Essex called forth all her tender affections, and kept her in a state of indecision, while her agitation and mental sufferings were truly pitiable. It was in vain that she endeavoured to adhere to one settled course of action; at one moment she consented to his execution, and in the next retracted her consent. While thus vacillating between two alternately preponderating forces, Essex's enemies told her that he desired to die, because, as he said, she would never feel in safety while he lived. This proof of penitence and concern for her welfare, however, revived all the fond affection she had entertained for the unhappy Earl, and had he possessed friends about her to have taken advantage of this feeling in his favour a different fate might have awaited him; but she was subsequently hardened against him by his supposed obstinacy in never applying to her for mercy, as she had hourly expected. This decided the affair, and she finally gave consent to his execution, which was privately carried into effect in the Tower; and in the hour of death he showed every symptom of piety and penitence, and resigned his breath, fully admitting the justice of his sentence.

Thus perished a nobleman endowed with many

noble qualities, amongst which were generosity, sincerity, friendship, valour, eloquence, and perseverance; but on the opposite side he was haughty, fiery, and daring even to rashness, and to his violence must be attributed his tragical death at the early age of thirty-four.

Elizabeth in the summer of 1601 made a visit to Dover, on hearing that Henry the Fourth was to be at Calais. She had hoped to have had a personal interview with a Monarch whom above all others she loved and respected, but many difficulties occurred to set aside the interview, and it was by mutual consent finally abandoned. Although the Queen was disappointed of Henry's visit, the celebrated Sully had a secret conference with her at Dover on the affairs of the two kingdoms. He came in disguise according to Henry's orders, and departed filled with wonder at the solidity of Elizabeth's judgment as well as her other mental powers, and he owns that she was entirely worthy of that high reputation which she enjoyed all over Europe.

On the other hand the affairs of Ireland were still in commotion, although Mountjoy had shown great talents in his administration, and had put every thing in the best condition to resist the Spanish invasion which was now daily expected.

At length the Spaniards under Don John D'Aquila arrived at Kinsale, when the native Irish showed a
t inclination to join them. They entertained a
, which was strongly cherished by the mal-
leaders, that they were descended from that
and the additional tie of the Catholic religion
united them. They likewise considered

with abhorrence the English introduction amongst them of the trial by jury, and D'Aquila endeavoured to persuade the people that Elizabeth was by the Pope's bulls deprived of her crown, and that the Spaniards were come to deliver them all from the power of the devil. By the spirited and well arranged measures of Mountjoy, however, the Spanish force after much slaughter was obliged to evacuate the kingdom, and a fair prospect appeared of the total reduction of the natives.

Though successful, this war was very burdensome to Elizabeth, who in spite of her frugal administration, was obliged to sell the royal demesnes and the crown jewels, besides exacting loans from the people to enable her to support a cause so honourable and essential to England. To meet these expenses she was likewise obliged to summon a Parliament; and it here appeared that neither the advance of old age nor the odium incurred by the execution of Essex, though it had diminished the acclamations of the populace upon her public appearance, had weakened the prerogative, but that supported by her own vigour it remained as high and uncontrollable as ever.

In this assembly various monopolies were canvassed, defended, and continued, but the Queen perceiving how odious they had become to the nation, desired the Speaker to acquaint the House that she would immediately cancel the patents for the most grievous of them. The astonishment, admiration, and gratitude expressed by them at this goodness and condescension of Elizabeth were even impious. Her subjects were not content with the customary

expressions of thanks, but while on their knees before her disgraced themselves by applying language only fit to be addressed to the Supreme Being. These speeches she heard patiently, and returned affectionate answers, and so terminated a critical session. By the wise course she took in voluntarily receding in part from her prerogative, she preserved her dignity and the affections of her people, while the Commons granted her a full indemnity in the shape of an unprecedented supply, and the capture of a rich Spanish ship by Sir Richard Levison and Sir William Mounson brought to England a prize worth a million of ducats.

But Elizabeth was now incapable of receiving any satisfaction from fortunate events. She had fallen into a profound melancholy, which nothing could alleviate or assuage; many causes seemed to combine to produce this unusual depression of so firm a mind, and many speculations have been hazarded upon the subject. It was said by some that she regretted having granted a pardon to the rebel Tyrone; others attributed her depression to the discovery of a secret correspondence carried on in her own court with her successor, the King of Scots. But the romantic cause, rejected at one time by historians, seems from late discoveries to have been the real one.

An incident, we find, happened about this time which revived her tenderness for Essex and filled her with the deepest sorrow for the consent she had given to his execution. It appears that some time previous to his imprisonment, upon his expression of regret that his duty should so often remove him

from her person and leave his cause in the hands of his enemies, she was moved with a tender concern for his interests and made him the present of a ring, desiring him to keep it as a pledge of her affection, and telling him that if he should fall into disgrace, whatever prejudices she might have been induced to entertain against him, upon sending her that ring she would give him a favourable hearing. Essex had reserved this precious gift to the last extremity; but after his condemnation seeing no other hope dawn upon him he was resolved to try the experiment. He accordingly committed the ring to the Countess of Nottingham to deliver to the Queen; but her husband, the mortal enemy of Essex, becoming acquainted with the circumstance, prevented her from executing the commission. Elizabeth expecting that this appeal to her affection would be made by her favourite, and ascribing the neglect of it to the invincible obstinacy of Essex, was instigated as much by resentment as policy to sign the warrant for his execution, and the fatal mandate issued from her hands.

Time passed on till the Countess of Nottingham being at the point of death, revealed the particulars to the Queen, and craved her pardon. Elizabeth, indignant and astonished at the fatal secret, burst into a furious passion, and shaking the dying Countess in her bed, said that God might pardon her, but she never could. She then rushed from her, and during the remainder of her days resigned herself to the deepest and most incurable melancholy, giving utterance thenceforward to nothing but sighs and groans. Ten days and nights she lay on the car-

pet, where she had thrown herself, and as her end was approaching, the Council demanded who should be her successor, when she named to them the King of Scots. She was fervently admonished by the Archbishop of Canterbury to turn her thoughts to God. She answered that she did so, nor did her thoughts in the least wander from him, and on the 24th of March, 1603, she expired gently, in the seventieth year of her age and forty-fifth of her reign, leaving behind her a character enriched with many good and noble qualities, and deservedly dear to the people whom she ruled. Naturally gifted and quick of apprehension, her youth had been spent in cultivating those studies which tend to the formation of the mind and enlightenment of the judgment, thus establishing a solid basis for after years to build upon. Early in life she had learned to appreciate those good and just principles of action on which alone permanent success may be established; and in after life, when called to the duties of one of the most onerous stations the world could at that period offer, her keen sense and penetrating judgment carried her successfully through difficulties and dangers that might well have dismayed many a stouter heart than hers. But it may be alleged that her means were not always nicely chosen, that dissimulation and even treachery was made use of to accomplish her purposes: to this I will merely say, that the circumstances in which she was placed and the influences acting around her, often constrained her to play a part quite opposed to her own wishes. That she was well and honestly advised there cannot be a doubt; and well did she deserve to be so, for she

ever used the utmost discrimination in the choice of her ministers and counsellors. That she was successful in her enterprises may be referred to the same cause, though in this respect she was not faultless, as the appointment of Leicester to the command in Holland would evince. Nevertheless, upon the whole, great discretion was used by her in adjudging the direction of her military and naval affairs. That she rendered her sway respected and her government beloved by consulting the feelings and wishes of her subjects, has by some been carped at as fawning and hypocritical, and only done to promote more selfish objects; but it must be borne in mind that Elizabeth did not blindly follow the popular will, and more than once directly opposed it after it had been unequivocably declared. In short, it is proved that her watchful foresight and prudent arrangements saved her country from all the horrors and depression of an internal contest, and promoted not only the growing freedom of religion, but with it the increase of useful industry and the propagation of those arts and sciences amongst her subjects which have raised England to the first rank in the scale of nations, and multiplied exceedingly wealth and comfort through all classes of its inhabitants. Her talents for government were indeed great and peculiar, and few sovereigns of England ever succeeded to the throne with more difficulties to contend with, while none ever conducted its affairs with such uniform success and felicity or left them in a more prosperous condition.

DONNA MARIA PACHECO.

In recording the actions of some of the most celebrated women we should be doing an injustice to the merits and memory of Donna Maria Pacheco were we to pass over in silence the courage, talents, and devoted affection she displayed in defence of her husband and her country. To enable the reader, however, to estimate her conduct aright, it will be necessary to take a cursory view of the affairs of Spain at the period in which she lived.

From the time that Charles the Fifth had assumed the title of King of Spain, many and various dissensions arose between him and his Spanish subjects.

An unfavourable impression had been made on their minds, by the immoderate and unconcealed partiality he constantly showed to the Flemings, and it most unfortunately happened for Charles that those on whom he lavished his favours generally proved unworthy of his preference; their sole aim being to amass wealth, which they accomplished in the most rapacious and unprincipled manner, so long as the opportunity lasted.

Thus the enormous sum of a million and one hun-

dred thousand ducats were remitted by them into the Low Countries in the space of ten months, while at the same time they secured every place of trust and profit the kingdom afforded. But what more immediately exasperated the Spaniards was the nomination of William de Croy, the nephew of Chievres, Charles's tutor, to the Archbishopric of Toledo, while still under the canonical age. The elevation of a youth and a stranger to the head of their church was an insult and an injury not to be borne, and both the clergy and the laity united in loudly exclaiming against this measure.

An indignant remonstrance was at length drawn up by the Junta of the Province, breathing the full spirit of liberty and demanding the redress of many of their grievances. A deputation of their members was appointed to present this to the King, and had set out with that intention, but receiving intelligence on the road that the forfeit of their lives would be the consequence of their so doing, they returned and informed the Junta of the circumstances in which they were placed.

This decided the matter, and more indignant than ever they considered that to be denied access to their Sovereign to present their just petitions was such an act of tyranny that nothing remained for the Castilians but with arms in their hands to drive away the mercenary band of foreigners who encompassed the throne, and prevented the voice of his injured subjects from reaching the ear of their Monarch.

They determined, therefore, to collect their whole force and to strain every nerve to break through

this fatal combination, formed solely for its own aggrandizement at the expense of their laws and liberties.

Preparations were immediately commenced, and they soon took the field with a force of twenty thousand men, which Padilla, the eldest son of the Commendator of Castile, a young nobleman of a generous and noble temper, great talents, and the darling of the people and of the soldiery, was chosen to command.

He now accomplished many brilliant enterprises in the Castilian cause, and was hailed as one of the deliverers of their country. But though highly esteemed for his abilities and endearing domestic qualities, his fine character was too pre-eminently virtuous to pass through life unenvied, and a cabal was speedily raised against him. His enemies were powerful, and by strenuous efforts caused the office of General to be taken away from him, and bestowed upon another, who soon showed, however, that he neither possessed talent nor experience sufficient for a place of such importance. Many reverses in consequence took place, and at length Padilla was restored to the office of General in Chief. The spirits of the soldiers suddenly revived, their arms were again successful, and past disasters were soon eclipsed by more recent victories. But at this period, though prosperous in their enterprises, their funds were nearly exhausted, they had not money to pay their troops, and fearing to impose farther burdens upon the people, the ruin of their cause appeared inevitable, and despair began to seize upon

many, when Donna Maria Pacheco, the wife of Padilla, relieved them from their dangerous situation.

Donna Maria was a woman noble in birth and spirit, of uncommon beauty and great natural talents. Her bosom was filled with the same fervent love of her country and ardent zeal in the cause of freedom as that of Padilla himself; but this zeal was farther enhanced by the most enthusiastic affection and heroic regard for the glory of her husband.

Urged by so many powerful incentives, she proposed with a boldness superior to superstitious fears, that in aid of so good a cause, the rich and magnificent ornaments of the Cathedral (of Toledo,) should be seized; and to avoid giving offence to the pious, she herself and her retinue clothed in deep mourning, marched in solemn procession to that church, where falling on their knees, shedding tears, and beating their breasts, they implored the pardon of the saints, whose shrines the distress of their country had forced them with deep regret to violate. This pious zeal screened her from the imputation of sacrilege, while the supply obtained by these means enabled Padilla for some time longer to carry on his operations with equal credit and renown,

that it is probable the arms of the Castilians
uld have been eventually victorious, had it not
n for the dilatory measures of the Junta. The
ti for vigorous efforts was spent by that body in
n otiations which ended in nothing, instead of pro-
by the present ardour of the hot but ill disci-
soldiery. The natural consequences followed,
to restraint they left their ranks, and de-

serted in great numbers to their various homes. While the royal armies, in spite of every exertion made by Padilla to prevent it, formed a junction and came up with his forces as they were passing over some ploughed land, where in consequence of previous heavy rains the soldiers sank at every step up to their knees, and long remained exposed to a destructive fire from the artillery of the royalists.

Padilla used every means his experience could suggest to animate his men to the combat; but in spite of all his exertions their fears made them deaf to his entreaties or threats, and seeing the day irretrievably lost, he rushed into the thickest of the fight, resolving not to survive the ruin of his party or his honour. But he found not the death he so eagerly sought, and being wounded and disabled was taken prisoner with many of his officers.

Padilla was not suffered to remain long uncertain of his fate, and the next day, without a trial, they condemned him to die. He was led shortly after to execution, accompanied by Don John Bravo, and Don Francis Maldonado, commanders of the troops of Segovia and Salamanca. The approach of death could not diminish his undaunted fortitude, he regarded it with calm and placid dignity, and on hearing Bravo, his fellow sufferer, express indignation at being proclaimed a traitor, observed that "Yesterday was the time for displaying the spirit of gentlemen, this day to die with the meekness of Christians." His last request was granted, and he obtained permission to write to his wife and to the community of his native city, Toledo. These letters, written in his last moments, breathe a spirit

of exalted patriotism and tender affection, while at the same time they attest his perfect collectedness and unruffled composure at such an awful period. They are as follow:—

(*The Letter of Don John Padilla to his Wife.*)

"SENORA,

"If your grief did not afflict me more than my own death, I should deem myself perfectly happy. For the end of life being certain to all men, the Almighty confers a mark of distinguishing favour upon that person for whom he appoints a death such as mine, which though lamented by many, is nevertheless acceptable unto him. I would require more time than I now have to write any thing that could afford you consolation. That my enemies will not grant me, nor do I wish to delay the reception of that crown which I hope to enjoy.

"You may bewail your own loss but not my death, which being so honourable ought not to be lamented by any.

"My soul, for nothing else is left me, I bequeath to you. You will receive it as the thing in the world which you value most. I do not write to my father, Pero Lopez, because I dare not; for though I have shown myself to be his son, in daring to lose my life, I have not been the heir of his good fortune.

"I will not attempt to say any thing more, lest I tire the executioner who waits for me, and that I may not excite a suspicion, that in order to prolong my life, I lengthen out my letter.

"My servant Sosia, an eye-witness, and to whom I have communicated my most secret thoughts, will inform you of what I cannot now write, and thus I rest expecting the instrument of your grief and my deliverance."

His letter to the city of Toledo runs thus:

"To thee, the crown of Spain and the light of the whole world, free from the time of the mighty Goths; to thee, who by shedding the blood of strangers as well as thy own blood, hast recovered the liberty for thyself and thy neighbouring cities, thy legitimate son Juan de Padilla gives information how by the blood of his body thy ancient victories are to be refreshed. If fate hath not permitted my actions to be placed among your successful and celebrated ones, the fault hath been in my ill-fortune, not in my good-will. This I request of thee as of a mother to accept, since God hath given me nothing more to lose for thy sake, than that which I am now to relinquish. I am more solicitous about thy good opinion than about my own life.

"The shiftings of fortune, which never stands still, are many; but this I see with infinite consolation, that I, the least of thy children, suffer death for thee, and that thou hast nursed at thy breast such as may take vengeance for my wrongs.

"Many tongues will relate the manner of my death, of which I am still ignorant, though I know it to be near.

"My end will testify what was my desire. My soul I recommend to thee, as to the patroness of Christianity. Of my body I say nothing, for it is not mine.

I can write nothing more, for at this very moment I feel the knife at my throat, with greater dread of thy displeasure than apprehension of my own pain."*

Having finished these letters, Padilla bravely and without a murmur submitted to his fate.

The dissolution of this confederacy, formed upon the most just and solid grounds, now took place, and all the cities which had entered into it, Toledo alone excepted, opened their gates and were treated with great clemency by their sovereign. Had the Castilian commons felt any portion of the enthusiasm for liberty which their leaders possessed, the arrival of the French in Navarre, which drew off the troops by which they had been conquered, would have been eagerly seized upon as affording them an opportunity to retrieve their affairs, but they were sunk in a lethargy from which nothing could rouse them, and their dejection was much too great to allow them even to dream of again taking up arms to recover their rights. Toledo, the birthplace of Padilla, still remained firm, however, under the influence of his widow Donna Maria Pacheco, whose grief far from declining seemed daily to gain strength, and even to acquire from its very intensity the power of concealing itself; her sorrow was far too deep to vent itself in unavailing complaints, while the heroic virtues of her husband were treasured in her memory with the most devoted reverence, and cherished with enthusiastic love. She thought only of revenging his death, and of exerting all her powers

* Protestant's History of Charles V.

of mind and body to promote the success of the cause which was so dear to him, and for which he had suffered a martydom.

At the same time the Castilians viewed Maria with the strongest sympathy and regard. Her sex, her courage, her talents, and her affection for a man whose person they loved and whose memory they venerated, all secured to her the hearts of the people, whilst the prudent measures she pursued with masculine firmness won their just confidence. Thus suffering nothing to delay or interrupt her in the pursuit of that object to which she had now devoted her whole energies, she seized the favourable moment when a great part of the troops were still absent in Navarre, and began her endeavours with wonderful vigour and celerity.

She despatched a letter to the French general in Navarre, offering him powerful assistance to encourage him to extend his invasion to Castile, and at the same time made use of every means in her power to revive the spirits of the other cities. She enlisted soldiers and exacted a large sum from the clergy to keep them on foot, and employed every art or method by which she might influence the populace to engage heartily in the cause, using crucifixes for her troops instead of colours, as if they were opposed to infidels, and crowning the whole with perhaps one of the most touchingly affecting exhibitions ever witnessed by the inhabitants of Toledo. With her infant son, clad like herself in the deepest mourning for their bereavement, seated on a mule, with a standard carried

before him, on which was depicted the manner of his father's execution, she headed a procession through the principal streets of the city to excite the ardent sympathies of its inhabitants, nor was she unsuccessful; but by many such means the minds of the people were kept in too continued a state of agitation to advert to the dangerous position in which they now stood, unsupported and opposed as they had become to the royal authority.

If circumstances were propitious to her cause, the period was no less favourable for giving effect to the energetic measures that Maria Pacheco adopted; for the absence of the troops rendered it impossible that the Regent should now attempt the reduction of Toledo by force. He had recourse to policy, however, and to shake the main stay of her power he used every endeavour to lessen her credit with the people, and form a party favourable to his interests within the walls; large promises were next tried in order to gain her, and to these were afterwards added the most pressing solicitations of her brother, the Marquis of Mondejar, but all was unavailing with this high-principled woman; the noble and firm spirit of Maria was not to be moved from her devoted purpose by such means.

The time however now approached, when by the expulsion of the French from Navarre, a part of the army was enabled to return to Castile, and Toledo was immediately invested. This did not quell the intrepidity of Maria Pacheco, but rather called forth a greater manifestation of vigour and

determination. She defended the town with the most obstinate courage, beating back the royalists in several engagements; and no impression was made by them upon the place, until circumstances of a different nature occurred which induced enemies of another class to attack her. It will be recollected that the appointment of the young de Croy to the Archbishopric of Toledo had been one of the chief grievances which led to the insurrection, and certainly the principal cause of complaint with the clergy. His death, which happened shortly after the city had been invested, and the succession of a Castilian to that see, induced the church party not only to withdraw their support, but to turn against Maria with vengeance in return, as they acknowledged, for her having invaded their property for the maintenance of the army. Dealing towards her with that dark spirit of falsehood and superstition which is so intimately connected with the church of Rome, they persuaded the credulous multitude that all her actions were performed by the force of enchantments, in which she was assisted by a familiar demon who attended her in the form of a negro maid. Impatient of the miseries the siege had caused, and despairing of succour, they were easily prevailed upon to take up arms against her, and the city was soon surrendered to the royalists without.

Still unsubdued, Maria did not yield; the memory of Padilla and his martyrdom in the cause still excited her to the struggle, and retiring to the citadel, she defended it with amazing fortitude for

four months longer. Even then it was only when unable longer to maintain her forces, and reduced to the last extremity, that she made her escape in disguise and fled to die in Portugal, where her family were numerous.

THE END.

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